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Life's simple pleasures

Browning once wrote feelingly about the difficulty of getting the right thing in the right place at the right time, but he was probably thinking about something else. For our part, we shall be content if, on a winter's afternoon, we can sit before a glowing fire with some chestnuts close at hand, for then we can give ourselves the pleasure of roasting the nuts at the fire. We shall not, of course, do it very well. The end-product will be largely charred without and indifferently cooked within. But never mind. We shall be happy . . . after we have applied a soothing salve to our scorched and tingling fingers. That (as our American friends would say) is the way the cookie crumbles; there is always a tricky bit in even the most pleasant of operations. And who knows it better than you, for are you not at this moment immersed in the joys of Christmas giving and depressed by the blanks that stay obstinately blank on your list? But take heart! The Midland Bank pulled that chestnut out of the fire for you when it devised Midland Bank Gift Cheques. Obtainable at any branch and costing only 1/- plus the amount you want to give, these warm-hearted tokens of goodwill are as welcome as - roast chestnuts on a winter's day. Happy Christmas!



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The London Charivari

I WAS much impressed by that photograph of an employee in New York's Federal Reserve Bank wearing steel-protected shoes to guard his toes against accidentally dropped gold bricks. What long and painful negotiations with the Bullion Stackers' Union, I wonder, preceded the issue of this footwear? How many shoes were tested to destruction, and from what heights, before the right tensile strength was achieved? How many ex-employees, lamed for life through letting fifty thousand dollars slip through their fingers, are getting some of it back in pension? Has anyone ever been buried under a subsidence of the stuff? We shall never be told. But I know some Government spokesmen nearer home who might well consider wearing protected shoes against dropped bricks of a more earthly kind.

Bright Side

A FAMILIAR pattern is developing in Wales, where a minority group, conscious of its own moral superiority, is using its grip on the legislature to suppress the natural aspirations of the



majority of native Welshmen—to stop them drinking on Sundays, in fact. The next step in this process, as we all know, is some form of *apartheid*. The dry will live in tidy, civilized suburbs,

and the drinkers in gin-ridden slums. The mobsters will be there in force, exploiting the situation, and all the windier Liberals will be there deplored it. So, of course, will the Lord's Day Observance Society. Life will become nice and quiet in England, on Sunday at any rate.

Peaceful Profits

THE Charge of the Light Brigade in a new film is to be ridden by cavalry from Yugoslavia, the only country with any cavalry regiments left, so there seems to be a future still



for the smaller, non-bomb-owning powers. Being the last army to carry lances or the last navy to have wooden ships or even the last air force to fly biplanes seems a better bet than having a vast, obsolescent collection of nuclear missiles and nobody in the forces worth photographing. Producers aren't going to pay you for the film rights of your hydrogen bombs.

Have Your Bomb and Eat It

IN case any of us thought that the present difficulties of the Labour Party were inevitable, it is worth comparing their performance on nuclear weapons with that of the German opposition, who voted on the subject



"All right, your mum washes whiter, but my dad has a higher HP Rating than your dad."

last week in such terms as to produce the following press comments:

"German Socialists . . . against nuclear aid for the Bundeswehr."—*The Times*

"German Socialists to-day approved atom arms for the Bundeswehr."—*Daily Mail*

"Germany an A-power? Socialists still undecided."—*The Guardian*

"We'll accept, says Brandt."

Daily Herald

"Bonn's Socialists vote both ways on the Bomb."—*Daily Telegraph*

Old hands at the party conference game say that the most impressive part of this performance was that the vote was unanimous. There's leadership for you, Mr. Gaitskell!

New Twist

I DIDN'T see the recent TV programme about an organization that might have been called, but apparently isn't, Suicides Anonymous, but reports said that it had dissuaded a number of viewers from taking their own lives. It was obviously a programme that was different.

On the Danger List

NOW that *Kemp's Gazette*, which lists bad hire purchase payers, has come into the limelight I can see wide scope for imitation. A good circulation is guaranteed for any paper with the courage to publish names of such common social risks as non-returners of books, guests who stay longer than advertised and raconteurs who don't stop if you've heard it. There may also be more specialized

publications: an Army List of barrack-room lawyers, a Marriage Guidance Council roll of single misers and shrews and an Equity record of touring managers who vanish after the first house on Friday in the middle of Lancashire, when it's raining.

Quiet Interval

IF there is any serious support for this outcry against the school that teaches children to imagine they're dead it will be impossible for an O.T.C. ever again to have a decent field day: you can't argue with an umpire who tells you your platoon has been wiped out. The death exercise, moreover, is useful training for life. Nothing is more tranquilizing, during a Christmas shopping surge in Oxford Street in the sleet when the gift parcel of china and glass is dashed to the pavement by a jab from the umbrella of a fat man humming "Once in Royal David's City," than to think yourself, as drilled in childhood, into a state of dust and ashes.

A Wide Measure of Agreement

SINCE it has never been admitted officially that the Communist leaders are in Moscow for the purpose of conferring together," I read before the conference ended, "the Russians and Chinese could evade the problem of producing an agreed communiqué." This is the perfect formula for all conferences from the Summit to Scar-

borough. It was all just a jolly get-together, the chaps happened to be passing and had a bit of a chat. No riddle, no mystery, no enigma. Nothing inscrutable because no one said anyone was even trying to be scrutable.

Just What I Wanted

THERE was a proper Christmasy air about the headline "Mr. Gaitskell Gives Surprise Portfolios." I like to think of Mr. W. R. Williams (Openshaw) unzipping his package with trembling fingers and, with a little cry, drawing out his shadow Postmaster-Generalship; and Mr. Fred Lee (Newton) writing his rapturous thank-you letter for the notional Ministry of Labour. But the idea of bran-tub Cabinet reshuffles might well be extended to the Government itself. It's a challenge to a man, long tipped by the press for the Board of Trade, to find himself unexpectedly in charge of Defence. The whole system could do with some shocks. What about Lord Tenby (né Lloyd-George) for the Scottish Office?

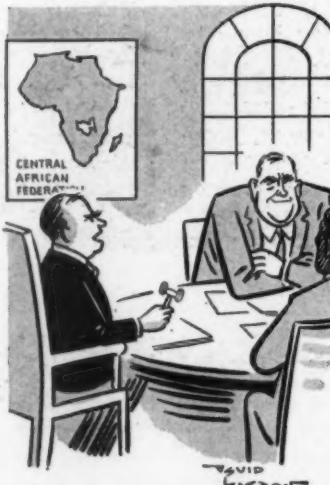
Wait For It

A FILM critic who says he doesn't care if he never sees another film of the St. Trinian's type is a dreadful spoilsport. Many of us are looking forward to that splendid moment when the gates of St. Trinian's are opened and up the drive, to vociferous cheering, sweeps a van labelled "Penguin Books."

Sermons in Stones

THE practice of painting the word "Repent!" on rock faces, once a thriving industry in Britain, has fallen into disuse, but there has been a recrudescence at Whitehead, County Antrim. An evangelist who daubed a message on the foreshore rocks was ordered to rub it out; whereupon a local councillor said that if that were done he would write the words again. Now others, not all evangelists, are writing on the same rocks. If anyone is looking for a precedent there was an action in 1925 against a dweller on the South Downs who put up a huge poster reading "Watch and pray . . . The air battle will be the end of the world." The court ruled that this constituted an eyesore. Was it a false prophecy? Well, we'll see.

—MR. PUNCH



"Shall we, if you'll pardon the expression, Sir Roy, put it to a vote?"



Mactoria: "There is no one depressed in this house. We are not interested in the possibilities of Recession. They do not exist."

Typical childhood in the Rhondda in its convulsive period. Boy alto of formidable range, tireless vestry singer and reciter. At ten won Band of Hope medal for most cogent essay on advantages of temperance, monogamy and thrift. Universities: Oxford and Madrid. Fourteen novels published. Sports: quoits and reading obituaries. Basic ploy: schoolmastering. Philosophy: cautious

GWYN THOMAS

Chancellor, who are you hounding now?

BUDGET, 1970

WELL, I have the thing ready. If in a few months you see the nation's economy going a little blue in the face, look for my prints around the neck. "Have a ball," the P.M. said, and there I was, under orders to kick the tax off the last waltz.

I am probably the first Chancellor to operate free from a noose of precedents and predecessors. I was given licence to kick around like a shot mustang, planting a flying hoof on all the lithe predators with their litany of exactions whose delight has been to skin the nation since Morton and his fork made their first stab and found the community's flesh so soft and good, and the average wage-earner so amenable a sucker.

The group assembled for Cabinet status was so raffish, so little homogeneous, it took us a week to get into the Royal Palace to get our credentials vetted. The only things we had in common were that we had all had at least one play, deplored life, put on at the Royal Court, and had misted the commercial prospects of at least three publishing firms.

To the post of Chancellor the P.M. gave a lot of thought. A frank hedonist and a model of pliancy, he had spent years muttering through his dreams against the sombre, life-hating shibboleths of Iron Chancellors like Snowden and Cripps, groaning every time he banged his toe against their petrified ethos of restriction and sacrifice. He had kept his toe equally in action against their successors who came to power on a wave of brave libertarianism, then spent their time tightening and securing the rivets of the Iron Age.

He looked at my record and found me just right. He wanted a man virgin of any interest in or knowledge of the classic economic theories that have allowed solid platoons of thinkers to stand blandly by and see nations numbed into accepting such demented felonies as scooping away half a man's pay for the propagation of schemes to which that man may be utterly hostile. I passed on that count. I had taken one quick look at Malthus and had gone instantly into hiding. He wanted a man as detached from mathematics as an Aztec. I qualified. I had been sued twice by the Ministry of Education for spreading despondency during

one of their biennial jehads to can Virgil and overtake the U.S.S.R.

So I got the job. I have my commandments ready in a leather bag in front of me. My first act in office was to throw out that preposterous box which has set the teeth of more generations on edge than even those grapes. One of the grislier themes of our lives has been the sight of successive economic wizards holding that article aloft and grinning delightedly. Even Sir Stafford managed it, a faint glint on a glacier. If when I walk forth to the Commons anybody asks me to revert to that object and to smile I shall ask a tipstaff to let him have it.

I had some trouble with the Treasury of course. On my first morning a group of senior officials stood around me, not saying a word and clearly trying to mesmerize me. I made the sign of the double-cross and fled.

My dreams had long been favoured by a theory that governments without money would be governments without mischief. I got a friend of mine to calculate how much more *per capita* we were spending on defence than even the moronic dinosaurs of 1960 had been prepared to do. He made a fast but wrong calculation, but his heart was in the right place and his conclusion was enough to nerve me in my resolve to do a really draconian bit of dentistry on the tax-collecting body. The defence situation seems right for a big jump towards a total pacifism. America is still piling up the stuff, but she has pursued a neurotic and invariable isolationism since her late President, a young eloquent moralist, an ex-beatnik and zenster called Mart, was seized in his second year of office and sent up in a rocket from Canaveral by the military junta which now sits squarely in Washington. As part of a package deal with the United Nations they have given New York to Sicily, after telling the Mafia to move up, and closed the frontier at Poughkeepsie.

In Russia in 1967 a serene Tolstoyan character came forth like Saul, blinded by the consumer-goods policy. He had been brought up in a far Mongolian village without TV, car or washing machine. He wanted the good life all in one jump and declared a total disarmament. The Russians now stand



naked, inoffensive and fat around a totem pole of material comfort. One or two minute countries had fiddled about with the bomb but their hired technicians had been bribed to subvert their mechanism, and the missiles, after impressive launchings for which special national anthems had been written, had hived back to the capital and landed on the heads of the dispersing dignitaries and bandsmen.

Then the back-drag started. I had to find money for my river-widening scheme. I have had for years a manic preoccupation with flooding or with any evil natural phenomenon that manages to make monkeys out of us over-armoured clowns, "we violence-motivated bums," as the late ex-beatnik President Mart said just a day or two before he vanished. I once lived near an antic stream that had me escaping by boat through a bedroom window even as the Borough Surveyor was broadcasting an appeal to save water. I envisaged a river widening scheme which would halve the amount of land to be taxed and fussed over and cut down the footholds of those crazy polluters who have reduced the river-fish population to six pike, each one bold and death-proof enough to snatch voters from towpaths.

As I sat night after night chiselling at my tablets of

revelation I felt changes coming upon me that would have caused the P.M. to thrust me into a clinic or a gaol. Something, a sharp, traceable, chemical change, comes over any man who is given power to alter the economic pattern of other people's lives. I had pictured my people as being pinned under a fall of oppressive rock. I was going to relieve the strictures and pressures like some sort of divine first-aid man, letting in great floods of oxygen. Credit would be made universal, everlasting. Home laundry facilities would outstrip the supply of dirty linen and each washing machine would have a special fitment that would keep the H.P. card crisp and dry. Cars would teem at a rate that would allow the pedestrian to walk for the first time in safety across the chassis of totally immobilized cars.

For three whole days I kept clean the resolve to walk through the field of taxes like a reaper. Then a report came in of the cost of the institutions that were to be put up for youths who have lapsed into a galvanic idiocy of body and mind from watching TV commercials and listening to "Juke Box Jury" which a host of sporting young parsons have introduced into special services.

Then came a report from the Home Secretary on the



"There are plenty of parking spaces if you know where to look for them."

expensive counter-measures to fight the wave of nihilistic all-right-Jacquerie, an eruption of armed robberies that followed the disastrous wage-drop of two years ago. The simultaneous appearance of four novels by Mr. Auberon Waugh a year before had chilled the last social ideal on either side of Offa's Dyke. The gutter-mutter school of writing was at full midnight and a fresh army of literate acolytes had lined up at the weirdly deep proletarian trough in which three hundred years of compassionate idealism were summarily drowned. There was mass-emulation of the sex-driven-loafer-hero and serious congestion in half a million bedrooms. Thinking of these things I began to fume like Mr. Gladstone. I slapped a penal tax on all wage-earners between eighteen and twenty-five to see if an exile from aphrodisiac jiggling and sub-human fiction would produce a race of less selfishly malignant apes.

The rich had me worried for a while. A stuttering radicalism from my early years had made me want to put the traditional boot in. But I didn't. It struck me that their present burden of taxes gives them a tonic sense of grievance that keeps them healthier than they deserve to be. And the behaviour of the excessively rich almost always gives a fine manuring absurdity to life. So I'll make them richer.

A few blows will be struck for a more considerable life of the senses. If you attend a live theatre, buy a book, a bottle of wine, a box of cigars, the rebates will be substantial. Hyphenated names, motor-bikes, expressed prejudices about race or religion, speaking voices raised above a certain level of decibels in bars, lapdogs, even certain types of lap, and people making overt love in the middle of public footpaths will be subject to an immediate tax of £1,000. Pedestrians surviving a year without mishap from a car will have a heavy

rebate and will be told to stop cowering and come out and face it like a man. A tax on attempted suicide by young stage performers will be the only really controversial measure. Children whose chances of happiness have been whittled to a stump by the rigorous demands of parents will be rescued and bounteously rewarded at the age of forty.

I couldn't do much about tobacco and beer, having the remnant of an indefeasible puritanical nerve. But on teetotallers and non-smokers I slapped a Complacency Tax that made most of them happy to slip back into the whirl of debauchery. Life was made tougher for players of tombola and people who provoke teenagers to shriek. They'll pay a special tax of a penny a breath.

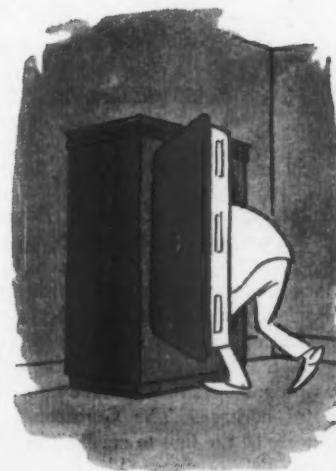
That was six months ago. I read my budget. The House was in a jovial mood. Nobody listened. Nothing has changed. The Treasury boys are back from Algeria. Looking at their mouths I think they've learned something from those camels. The flood news is bad to-night. I didn't like the look in the P.M.'s eye this afternoon. Ever since he appointed Field-Marshal Montgomery to the see of Canterbury he has grown daily less sportive. His face has taken on a harder, more Mosaic set. He no longer chuckles over the weaknesses of man. He denounces the slackening fibres of the young. They had a dinner last night. They toasted narrow rivers and preconceptions even less broad. I think that's the ambulance coming round the corner for me now.

Next week:

(10) ARNOLD WESKER, Minister of Housing



"Which shall we parcel up for him for Christmas?"



The Bundeswehr—Welcome!

By BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

YOU want the best bases—we have them. No sooner is it announced that the Americans, temporarily short of a surfeit of gold, are economizing by recalling the families of servicemen stationed in Britain than the Federal German Government confirms that negotiations are taking place "with a view to securing supply depots and bases and military training areas in Britain for the Bundeswehr." What we lose on the dollars we make up on the Deutschmarks.

As we move firmly into the 'sixties there can be nothing but praise for the Government and its neopolitic post-Keynesian economics. Britain is a land with few natural resources: no oil, no uranium, no copper belts, no aluminium, no Westerns, no cotton, no wine. Coal, yes; but coal is mined to-day only to keep the miners in employment and Dr. Bronowski happy. Our only permanent natural resources are our superb bases, and by golly we must see to it that they remain way out in front, the best in the world.

Why are British bases so good? What is the secret of their appeal to the foreigner? Well, first there is the subsoil—the Keuper marks, clay-with-flints, oolites, gravels, Bunter sandstones, Greensand, pick where you may—always solid, well drained and eminently suitable for hutments, cafeterias, air-strips, parade grounds and launching pads. Communications everywhere are excellent: few bases are more than a minute or two from a railway station, and most have ready access to M1. A country that decides to site its bases in Britain knows that it is getting the best that money can buy. There are no labour problems: a friendly Exchequer ensures that redundancy in any site-area is immediately brought up to the customer's requirements in terms of manual, skilled and managerial personnel. The native population is friendly and ever ready to co-operate. (Marchers and other demonstrators are laid on to add a touch of the picturesque and remind the base-occupiers that Britons never shall be slaves.) Food is superb.



"All right then, heads WE tow it away, tails YOU do"

At the moment, of course, Britain does not enjoy a complete monopoly of the market in military bases: a few countries, from ridiculous outmoded reasons of national pride, struggle to compete under enormous handicaps, but in the long run hard facts will triumph and Britain will come into her rightful heritage. The Germans will obviously be the first to crack. Then, I suspect, the Russians. The Commies, you see, are realists: unlike the Americans who are prepared to economize on bases in order to buy up real estate at Dagenham and elsewhere, the Commies will know when they are licked. They know—or at least their Kremlin bosses know for them—that their own bases in Mother Russia and the satellite countries are hopelessly inefficient, too remote from the world's crossways and dangerously vulnerable in case of internal revolution. It is clearly to Russia's advantage to put *all* her bases in the hands of someone they can trust, some country with a flair for bases and the real know-how of servicing them. Britain. It is an open secret that top Russian scientists are already surveying British bases and have their eye on half a dozen in Mid-Wales and the Scottish Lowlands. Only a natural reticence—

characteristic of Euro-Mongol stock—and the belief that the recession in Britain is certain sooner or later to depress prices in the bases market has stayed their hand. I only hope that they do not wait so long that all the real snips are snapped up before they come in buying.

As for the Americans, well, they are of course already here to some extent. But not in depth. The Americans will some day realize that their own home-made bases are out of whack with conditions in the second half of the twentieth century. Cape Canaveral, Cape Cod, Death Valley, Gary, Richmond, Stoke (Ohio), Wichita and Syracuse are minutes, but minutes, away from the big centres and will soon be mere ghost bases compared with those in Britain. Moreover they are dangerous; those things could go off *pouf!* just like that, merely through some fault in the mechanism or some carelessness on the part of a screening officer. Senator or President-elect John Kennedy and his pretty wife are known to be base-conscious. Like most Americans they like the best available regardless of price, and it is my belief that the new administration will gradually abandon inferior domestic substitutes and

plump for more and more bases in Old England. The bases you can trust.

The Chinese bases in Britain will probably, for purely sentimental reasons, be located in the Potteries, where the inhabitants already have a thorough knowledge of bone china and oriental porcelain, and are familiar with the commune set-up of industrial togetherness. For the Japanese, sites have been plotted in Yorkshire, Caithness and Belfast. The Italians will probably go—according to the latest information available—to Dorset and Shropshire, the Spaniards to Leicestershire, Ghana and other African countries to East Anglia, Birmingham and Nottingham . . . There remains the problem of the French. It does seem, most regrettably, that the France of Charles de Gaulle is determined to stay out of the Common One (as Britain's Base Development Corporation will be known) and try to set up a rival organization, the Inner Market, on her own. Well, we shall see. In the long run the decision will rest on simple economic matters of fact and I am quite sure our own British prices will be found far more reasonable, all things considered, than the French. In these days the small operator in bases has little chance against the experienced giant.

And there's another thing. Once Britain has secured a virtual monopoly of foreign bases and they are all here as it were under one roof, it is most unlikely that the occupying powers or base operators will countenance a breakaway faction in France. It would obviously be too risky. World opinion dedicated to world peace would command the French to toe the line.

Meanwhile, a hearty welcome to the Bundeswehr.



Is There Anybody There?

THE Man-in-the-Moon
Came down in June

And found his way to Perth

A month too late

After World War VIII

To meet the Man-on-the-Earth.

— PAUL DEHN

That Wonderful Stuff

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

THIS plan for plastic money has drawn the usual barrage of beefs. "Suppose we run out of melamine formaldehyde at peak spending periods?" says Dr. Gunther Zeromski of British Cellulose Acetates. And Lord Pigley is whining about loss of face in the City once such revered figures as Clore and Cotton start "exchanging cartloads of tiddlywinks." Personally I say pshaw. As I see it (from the liberal standpoint of enlightened ignorance) the advantages of the scheme are numerous enough to stand classification by alphabet.

Alloys. Good riddance to them. The national conscience has been too long bruised with talk about silver when we really mean cupro-nickel with a smidgeon of copper and zinc. Cab-drivers who can say "Do you mind it all in acrylic resin?" will be happier men, therefore better drivers.

Banking. If you've ever been a branch junior humping £100 in copper out of the sub-basement strong-room you won't need *me* to enlarge on the thrill of a lightweight coinage.

Carats. Well, we can finally stop worrying about what the hell these are, and why they only go in nines, fourteens, eighteens and twenty-twos.

Door-knobs. Reliable scientific works cite these as the easiest thing in the world to mould in plastics. Isn't a little green disc marked 2s. 6d. going to be a damned sight easier? If stick-in-the-mud Royal Mint workers strike for dignity money they can have it—in little green discs.

Embossing, Ease of. Is this, or isn't it, self-evident?

Fairs. Plastic cash sounds the knell of the stall where pennies roll down slots into the promoter's pocket. Plastic pennies won't roll on existing gradients, and the acquisition of steeper slopes will prove financially crippling.

Gold. It can just get off its high horse, that's all. Would anyone care to estimate how much bakelite money can be turned out for £12 13s. 6d., the present cost of 1 oz. of the inflated

yellow mineral? Let global gold supplies go back where they belong—into world teeth.

Heat, Manipulation under. Consider the advantages of being able to melt down the rent money, now clinking untidily in a variety of mantelpiece ornaments. Pass your savings once or twice over the gas-ring and you can stack it in neat blocks in the garage.

Isinglass. This could go into some of the new coins, as far as I can see from my copy of *Science Made Simple*. Who, up to now, has enjoyed the richly fascinating experience of preserving eggs in next term's school fees?

Jackdaws. Unless some fool has the idea of tarring-up the coinage in synthetic silver dip before issue, these birds are going to be cured of a silly old deep-seated parlour trick.

Kilts. Whatever the name is for the little leather bag that hangs down in front, Scotsmen will be a lot more comfortable in "Strip the Willow" when

the old-fashioned small change is thrown out in favour of the new £75-to-the-pennyweight materials.

Lord's. Captains, unable to spin a coin in midfield in case it's carried off over the score-board by the wind, will now be spared making a foolish spectacle of themselves, with all those shrugs, grimaces and fitful toeings of the turf.

Maundy Money. It will have to be collected in future by U.S.A.F. nose-cone recovery nets (see "Lord's," above), and as a result the whole shoddy business of paupers pretending to be grateful for fourpence may soon disappear from our traditional calendar. Newspaper-readers who turn to the pictures first will find a welcome change on the morning of Maundy Friday.

National Debt. This will get a good deal lighter.

Organ-Grinders. Throw a pressed-milk sixpence out of a first-floor window and it may well drift in again



"When are you going to teach me to shop?"



"In this corner we have Ted Critchton, a bricklayer from Camberwell, who tells me his girl friend Maisie is looking in to-night . . ."

at the window below. Street musicians of all kinds will be discouraged, and eventually give up in favour of honest work, easing the task of Labour Exchanges everywhere.

Pins, Safety. Husbands still searching for the inevitably absent pin to draw together the ragged edges of a change-rent trouser pocket can relax for good.

Quid. Here we undoubtedly strike a blow for the tourist trade. Foreigners who hear the words "Lend me a quid" and find from their dictionary that it means a lump of chewing tobacco will perhaps see some sense in it when the natives begin to hand each other lumps of chewing *money*. (See "Vitamins.")

Rialto, Bourse, Stock Exchange, etc. (But see my earlier reference to Lord Pigley.) Boy, is the common man in for a laugh as his pin-striped betters wade through the vats of assets!

Ship Halfpennies. The new designs aren't out, I realize that. But if this isn't the moment to get rid of that engraved square-rigged skiff, or whatever it is, and put an end to the notices in pubs telling us to put all ours in their collecting-box, my name's not The Prince of Wales, Reigate. The same goes for Bun Pennies.

Tipping. Once a diner can claim that he *did* put something under the plate but that it's blown away in the icy blast from the service doors, this iniquitous system will have had it.

Work. Executives are bound to ease off on this. Staying late at the office every night for a month and getting nothing on payday but a crate of Smarties will relax any man. Result, nose-diving coronary statistics.

Xebec Halfpennies. In connection with "Ship Halfpennies" (above), I'm just warning designers not to try to get round this with Xebecs, which are Turkish boats with lateen sails, as anyone compiling an alphabet, and badly stuck at this stage, knows well enough.

Yo-Yo. If the crown comes back with the new currency the kiddies will have a splendid toy ready-made, given a gimlet and a bit of string. When they tire of it they can go out and spend it. What child was ever able to do this with the old-type Yo-Yo?

Zambesi (and other rivers). Water, the world over, it is estimated, has enough dropped money at the bottom to finance a small nation's entire nuclear defence programme. This wicked waste will end. Small change dropped overboard from, e.g., Xebecs will now float.

I've nothing to add, really, except to point out that when it comes to those maddening money-market fluctuations, "plastics soften when heated and harden when cooled"—I quote from a learned work—"the process being capable of infinite repetition without deterioration of the basic substance."

Can one say more?



I Wished the Floor Would Open

ARNOLD'S idea. Get together, he says. Thirty people in a coach. Light ale by the crate. Sea breezes on the front. Make you feel ten years younger. Five of us sell tickets. Total strangers meet at dawn. Drizzle falls on straw hats and open-toed sandals. Very chilly. Cloudburst at Crawley. Deluge at Brighton. Sea like porridge.

Arnold takes over. Finds pub with piano. Drinks all round. Everyone matey. Pianist plays "Roll Me Over," "Whiffenpoof Song," and "Nellie Dean." More drinks. More songs. Pianist passes out. Arnold to the rescue. Pours him into coach, loosens tie, makes newspaper bib. Back home by

midnight. Frigid good-byes. Pianist still out cold. No one wants to know.

Arnold resourceful. Frisks pianist, finds letter. Deciphers address; halfway to Kent. Talks about loyalty, duty to fellow man. Hails taxi. Musters tact. Pays fare in advance. Pianist starts to sing. Arnold says no to gag. Refers to charity, tolerance, fear of getting glasses smashed. House looms in sight. Everything dark. Arnold determined. Rings bell. Woman appears. Never heard of Arnold. Never heard of coach. Asks pianist why cut holiday short? Should be at Brighton. Booked for three weeks. Door slams. Rain falls. Turn round. Taxi gone. — P. O.

Roastit Beastie wi' a Steamed Towel, Please

By E. S. TURNER

WHAT sort of food is served at a fashionable engagement party on Sark? Or at a get-together of the East Suffolk Anæsthetists? What is a good hock to offer the Archbishop of Canterbury after he has blessed the porch of a cathedral? How many courses are called for to mark the opening of the grouse season at Machynlleth? What do non-vegetarians eat at the *Quatorze Juillet* celebrations at Bombay?

The answers to questions like these are familiar to those of us who, week after week, turn with gentlemanly relish to the "Menu File" of the *Caterer and Hotel Keeper*. This is a feature which is both educational and escapist (though even here one is not safe from the *Bombe Surprise*).

Menus accepted for publication must reflect special efforts for special occasions. And what a superb range of special occasions there is! The Alsatian dinner of I.C.I.'s Alkali gourmets in Cheshire, the Chicago Night dinner of the Rob Roy Country Club at Aberfoyle, the Greek dinner of the Southport Wine and Food Society, the Bristol University Students' *Soirée Samarkand* (finishing up with Sweethearts' Lips, Sweet Breath Seeds, Stimulating Nuts and Refreshing Sugar)—these give but a slight idea of the restless exoticism which is practised nightly at dinner tables in Britain.

The catering industry takes it all with splendid calm. At Arundel the manager of the Norfolk Arms shows no surprise when the 'phone rings and a voice asks him to lay thirty-three covers for the Arundel Society for Prosecuting Felons and Thieves. He assumes, no doubt, that this venerable body is anxious to celebrate the conviction of a peccant head clerk, and lays on an appropriate feast. At Chislehurst the manager of the Boar's Head does not roll his eyes heavenward when the Marlowe Society asks him to serve a

roast royal swan, with suitable quantities of ale, mead and sack; entering into the spirit of the thing he sends out his varlets to pick apples from Scadbury Park, the poet's old stamping-ground. At Buxton the chef of the Palace Hotel thinks nothing of descending by parachute, with a top-hat full of rabbits, during the banquet of the British Ring of the International Brotherhood of Magicians, while his talented staff are distributing chocolate-coated teddy-bears from self-illuminated bowls.

Nor does anyone in the industry think it 'odd that President Nkrumah should ask for five hundred portions of fresh raspberries to be flown out to Accra, where guests are waiting to celebrate their lack of dependence on Britain.

Of course not all the menus are for such specialized occasions as these. There are routine luncheons to General Norstad, to American nuclear submarine crews, to Russian trade delegates (who find bananas a novelty), to mayors of twin towns, to harbour trustees and rugger clubs; and there are coming-of-age parties galore not only for heirs and heiresses but for bodies like the Crankshaft and Cylinder Grinders' Association, who richly deserve a blow-out at Brighton after twenty-one years of unremitting abrasion.

There is something in the Menu File for everyone. Parents who fear their undergraduate sons may be ill-nourished will be relieved to read of such occasions as the Edwardian dinner given by a retiring president of the Union at Manchester University. Scorning a *Soirée Samarkand* as meretricious, he followed the "classic pattern" of his grandfather: ten courses broken by sherbet at half-time. The food had to be carried in from the refectory kitchens in vans with charcoal hot air locks and then served from gas-operated hot cupboards.

For indignant ratepayers, the Menu

File is a must. Here they may read of *foie gras* served at dinners of the mounted police (what, they may ask, did the horses get?). They will find confirmation of an old suspicion that very little water is drunk at the annual inspection of the water-works. Similarly, indignant shareholders may read just what the directors tucked away at those "special luncheons" which are never mentioned in the balance-sheet. Not that anyone would grudge the noble spread offered to the directors of Heinz on the opening of their new factory at Paisley. It included *Entremets*

THEN AS NOW

A DARWINIAN IDEA

SUGGESTED BY THE CATTLE SHOW



THE OLD SORT



THE MODERN IMPROVEMENT



WHAT IT MUST COME TO

(But no one foresaw the day when there would be no livestock at the Smithfield Show.)

(December 23, 1865)



Seulement Pour La Maison Heinz (one hopes there were at least 57 of them) and the suggestively named *Désires des Dames*, which is unlikely to have included baked beans.

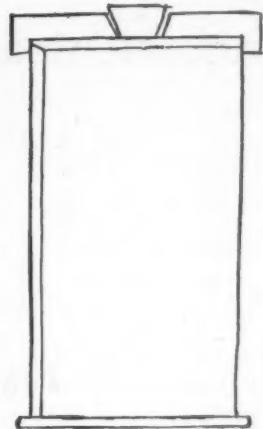
Film fans will learn with pleasure of the barbecued Norfolk turkey which was served to guests on the birthday of Jayne Marie, daughter of Miss Jayne Mansfield, in Eccleston Mews, Belgravia; and of the fried fillet of

flying fish offered to Miss Joan Crawford when, for reasons undisclosed, she was feted by Pepsi-Cola at Bermuda. It is refreshing to find that goddesses *do* eat. On at least one occasion the "Miss World" contestants appear to have got through soup, sole, pheasant, omelet and *petits fours* at the Westbury, though whether before or after the contest is not clear.

Without the contributions of the three Services, and more especially of the Royal Air Force, the Menu File would lose much of its splendour. Guest nights, autumn balls, dinings-out of Air Officers Commanding—these show the Forces at their most heroic. Here is the Kent Yeomanry getting its teeth into Rayleigh's Flummery with King Harry's Shoe-Strings. Here is the Royal Air Force sitting down to a Christmas menu on Christmas Island, with roast Oahu chicken helped out by Californian turkey and Aylesbury duckling. In the Golden Dragon Club, Singapore, the Far Eastern members of the Army Catering Corps Officers' Club lower their chopsticks into a Shanghai dinner. It is a hot night and the menu is long, running from Four Precious Soup to Almond Curd with Dragons' Eyes, but happily there is relief at hand. A note explains that "the custom of bringing steamed towels to the diners before, during and after dinner was extremely refreshing." Some of the Territorial regiments whose gastronomic battles are recorded may have been disbanded by now, but it is well known that a unit often goes on eating and drinking for many years after its head has been cut off.

Faced with all this competition members of the Hotel and Catering Institute are spurred to put on something really out of the ordinary. At Southport local members ate a dinner made up entirely of pre-packaged foods, starting with *Consommé Alphabet*, followed by frozen trout from individual polythene bags, then lamb loin chop from cartons, and so on. Technical note: the trout appeared as *Truite Meunière*, not as *Truite Polythène*.

Waggish menus do not always look wildly funny in cold print, long after the event. Perhaps hungry biologists really enjoy seeing *canard roti Anglaise* listed as "heat-irradiated carcase of *Anas platyrhynchos*." Perhaps even "*crème de Nabarro*" and "*consommé*



Mikardo" sound acceptable after a few drinks on election night. Sometimes it is hard to know whether a menu is waggish or not, as when one finds dog-lovers at Bridgnorth sitting down to Yorkshire Terrier Pudding. Strange things have happened at Bridgnorth before now.

The Scots will protest that their menus are not waggish but traditional. *Hors d'œuvres* tends to appear as "a

wee bit o' a' that." Then follows a list of beasties and chookies which have been b'iled or roastit, with tatties and neeps respectively champit or bashed, and tairts fra a' the airts. Every other dish has unspecified "things intill't." Indeed, lack of specification is the be-setting sin of Scots' menus. "Soup frae the beastie's tail" could be ox-tail, kangaroo-tail or horse-tail. And what

are "wee beasties frae the Tail o' th' Bank"?

One is glad to see that when the Royal Scottish Academy entertained the German Ambassador the menu was printed in formal French. If the truth were known it is probable that Ribbentrop was convinced that Britain was not to be taken seriously when he was offered Shoogly Wullie wi' Shakken Jock.

Fish from the Tobacconist's

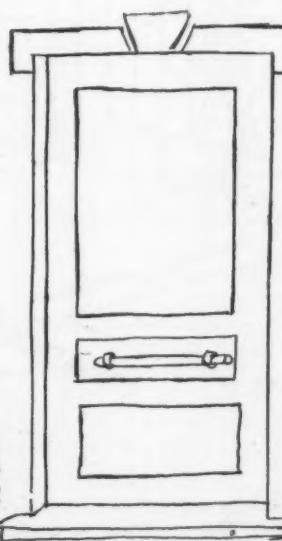
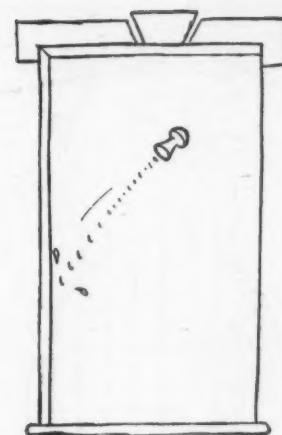
By H. F. ELLIS

I HAVE never (I shall say to my grandchildren) been one to praise time past for its own sake, wilfully shutting my eyes to all the benefits that man has won for himself since Norfolk suits were compulsory at preparatory schools. But you must forgive me if I heave a sigh, as old men will, for the days when grocers sold groceries, chocolate came from sweetshops, and it was as necessary to go to a chemist for razor-blades as to a shoe-shop for shoes.

Oh, yes, of course there were General Stores even in my young days. When a village had only one shop it was natural enough that the old lady who ran it should cater, within certain limits, for all the needs of the villagers, and a very odd smell indeed such places had, with their mixture of beeswax, iron saucepans, oatmeal in sacks, toy wooden horses, hanks of wool, kitchen soap, well-blackened bits of bacon, and those new-fangled tins of beans with the dents on top where someone had tried to hammer down the tell-tale convexity. There were also, at the other end of the scale, sizable Department Stores in large centres of population, where shoppers might buy anything from towel-rails (in the Basement) to grand pianos (on the floor immediately below Garden Furniture and Teas) by simply ascending through Groceries, Fancy Goods, Ladies' Fashions, Juvenile Wear, Gramophones and Books, Soft Furnishings, and Carpets. I remember, when I was no older than you are, my dears,

buying a ninepenny white-metal pin-box, made in Japan, for my mother, and then completing my Christmas shopping in *the same building* by simply going upstairs and getting a cotton handkerchief for my father with his first initial embroidered on it in blue.

So you must not think that there is anything strange or shocking to me in the idea of multiple stores dealing in a wide variety of merchandise. But in between the General Store and the Department Store, for the convenience of shoppers who lived neither in hamlets nor near the West End of London, but in those larger villages, provincial towns and suburbs which are the heart of England, there existed in my heyday a pleasing multiplicity of small shops devoted each to the sale of some particular homogeneous commodity. Butchers, bakers, grocers, greengrocers, fishmongers, ironmongers and dairies sold, respectively, meat, bread, groceries, fruit and vegetables, fish, ironmongery and milk. It is true that tobacconists sold walking-sticks, but that may have been because nobody cared to trade exclusively in so sluggish a line; they also sometimes sold sweets, but in that case were careful to call themselves, in somewhat curly characters on their shop-fronts, "Tobacconist and Confectioner." The men and women who manned these shops were specialists, trading only in the type of goods to which, whether by chance, heredity, inclination, or through



SEMPE

lack of competition, they had decided to devote themselves. It did not occur to the greengrocer to sell soup on the side, or to the chemist to try to do the tobacconist down by stocking cigarettes. The butcher would as soon have thought of adopting the grocer's white coat as of running shelves of tinned foods along one wall of his shop.

I am aware that to you, who are accustomed to go into any shop outside



"Three-ha'penny one—where've you been all these years?"

which you happen to find yourselves, without even troubling to notice what kind of establishment it purports to be, and buy everything you want, all this may seem a little bizarre. But to me, who am older and a great deal wiser, the present age of non-specialization in shopping is distasteful in the extreme. I do not desire to buy tinned pilchards at the baker's, nor to see cigars in cylindrical containers at the green-grocer's. It offends me, when I am in search of stationery, to find myself leaning against a trough or bin full of frozen peas, fish fingers and turkey pies (for four persons), from which rises a kind of steam or miasma of what I believe to be liquid hydrogen. It is all very well on the Continent, where abnormality is in a sense a part of the enjoyment, to buy beer at a hardware store. Here, in England, at what used

to be my tobacconist's, I do not expect to be offered chicken suprême in tinfoil trays (simmer for fifteen minutes if unfrozen, or twenty if needed immediately after purchase), still less to read a notice just above a jar of mint humbugs appealing to me to "Let Us Handle Your Holiday Travel Problems. B.E.A. Bookings Accepted Here."

It was in 1960, as I remember, children, that I first became aware of the rapid spread of this strange, and to my mind greedy, development. Wishing to buy some backing in Brecon, while en route for parts farther west, I sought naturally enough for a shop with fishing-rods in the window, found one and made my purchase. So far, so good. But I also needed toothpaste, among other small items, and before leaving the shop inquired of the man I had taken to be a tacklist where I could

get some. He at once led me across his shop, past a magazine stall, where I bought an evening paper, and a confectionery counter, where I bought chocolate, to a darkish corner where I bought toothpaste and a small bottle of aspirins. He also sold me tobacco, thus reducing my list of last-minute requirements, which I had thought would entail a pleasant stroll in holiday mood about the streets of Brecon, to the solitary item "wrist-watch strap." I did not ask him where these were obtainable, having already noticed several dozen hanging on cards near the door.

Alerted by this curious experience I began to take careful note of my surroundings when shopping and very soon found that it was practically impossible to discover a grocer who sold only groceries, a haberdasher who dashed

nothing but habers, a cobbler who stuck to his last. Fish fingers were everywhere. In one Cornish village, known to me of old as a well-mannered place where it was a pleasurable necessity to visit all the six little shops in order to obtain meat, flour, melons, cream, tobacco and a shirt with "Hiya!" on the back, I was shocked to find myself buying all these things at the post office, plus paperbacks and whisky. By 1961 outfitters in my own south-westerly London suburb were selling theatre tickets, and within a year or two after that the last of the ironmongers gave in and took to hanging salami

sausages from his ceiling. Since then, as you know, children, I have not cared to go out shopping save to that little old-fashioned second-hand furniture shop that still keeps its soups and Christmas cards curtained off.

But there it is (I shall say to my grandchildren). I mustn't keep you here at my knee all day while an old man grumbles away his time and sheds a bit of a tear for the old days. Run along out now—and if you're passing Ye Olde Cake Shoppe get me a quart of rum for my catarrh, dears, and perhaps an olde cake too, if they happen to stock such a thing.

On Christmas Day in Australia

By CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

A LOT of rum things seem to be happening in Australia these days. The gentlemen who go round the Sydney stores dressed up as Santa Claus have been making a fuss. They all belong to the Miscellaneous Workers' Union, there not being quite enough Santae Clauses to run a union of their own, and they have got the Miscellaneous Workers' Union to put in a claim that they be paid "danger money" for carrying on their trade. "Being Santa Claus," says the Union, "is more hazardous than an ordinary occupation." "Santas," they explain, "have to put up with a lot of mischievous children, and that takes a lot of ingenuity." "Santas," say the Union. We pedants prefer "Santae," though neither of us can explain why it is in the feminine at all. Anyway I well understand that Santas, like the rest of us, want to get a rise, but why is the claim that they make a claim to "danger money"? I should long to know what it is that the "mischievous children" have been up to.

Christmas is of course a curious feast in Australia. It falls on one of the hottest days of midsummer. Yet the Australians charmingly prefer to celebrate it as if they were still living in England—holly, turkey, plum-puddings, reindeer, artificial snow on the ground and all the rest. For all that I know

they even lay on a special fog just to show that they are thinking of us, which is jolly decent of them. And of course, among all the rest, Santa Claus has to be dressed up in cloak and snow-boots and false beard. I can quite see that it is all very inconvenient. "Sweated labour" would indeed be a fair description of it. A claim to some sort of "hardship" money would be intelligible enough, but where does the "danger" come in? A bit of ingenuity, I can well see, may be required in order to dot the odious little children one when their mothers aren't

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No. 10

From Monday next,
SEVEN DAYS' MASS INACTIVITY
as a protest against Public
Apathy in the matter of Civil
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looking. But danger? Do the children actually set them on fire?

Anyway it seems a pretty open question whether the whole business is not going to do the Santas more harm than good. The store-keepers are not impressed by their claim. Their argument is that having Santa Clauses cluttering up the place is really more trouble than it is worth. They had only kept them on because they thought that they pleased the kiddies. If the kiddies are going to set them on fire, then, before anyone knows where he is, the fire will spread and the whole store be destroyed. If there is as much trouble as all that, the best thing would be to cut them out altogether.

This come-back was a good deal more, it seems, than the Santas had bargained for. But there was, alas, worse to come. Up till now the income-tax people had not cottoned on to it



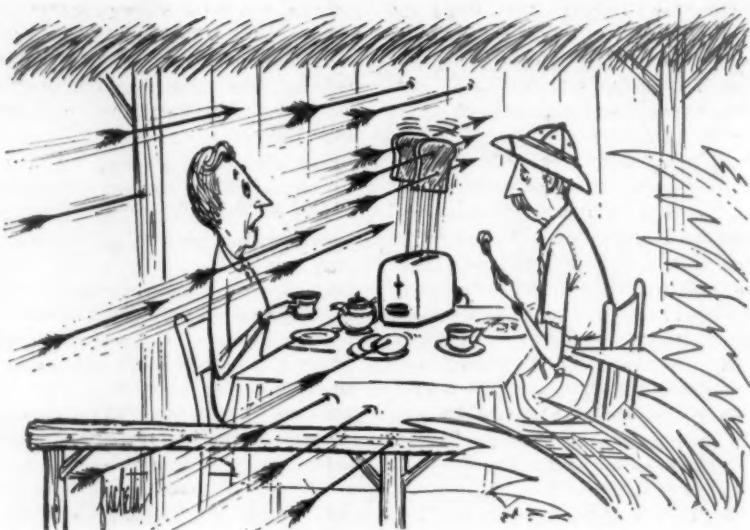
"The rules are pretty much the same as yours, dear."

that being Santa Claus was a real profession at all. They thought that some jolly fellow just dressed up for the hell of it after his own serious working day was done, and it had not occurred to them that there was an income in it. Now they are saying, reasonably enough, that if there is a claim to raise wages there must have been wages already, and why have those wages not been returned and tax paid on them? The children, it seems, have got on to this and go around singing an odious song about

*On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
When Father Christmas has to pay*
—and what with the children tugging at one sleeve and the income-tax man tugging at the other, life for Santa Claus in Australia this Christmas is just no fun at all.

Now, you will say, if it's all as difficult as that, the obvious thing for the Santas is to down beards and get another job. It is not as easy as all that. There is a credit squeeze in Australia as in other countries. The Miscellaneous Workers' Union will fight like tigers to protect any of their members in the miscellaneous work that he happens to be doing. But they are not as miscellaneous as all that. Moving from one job to another is not so easy. "Hi, what's the gime? After my job, are you?" says comrade to comrade in fraternal accents.

So the Santas have come out with another proposal. The Santas' spokesman—history does not seem to record his name, but may we not hope that it is Claus Four?—has announced that private enterprise has manifestly fallen down on the Christmas job and that the industry ought to be nationalized. It is intolerable that Santa Claus should any longer be at the mercy of the profit motive and the higglings of the market. Christmas is a national service and should be nationally provided. The Government should guarantee security of employment and a living wage to every Santa Claus on the market. There is a Labour Government in New South Wales and it may well be that they will get away with it. "The Labour party," triumphantly argues Claus Four, "is pledged to the nationalization of all the means of production and distribution. What is a means of distribution if Father Christmas isn't?" Can anyone think of an argument that it is more difficult to answer than that one?



Concerning Astro-Luno-Satellite-Telecommunication

By A. P. H.

FEW of the satellites at present in orbit seem to have much appeal for the Common Man. But some of those promised or expected look like bursting into the home one day. There is the Weather Satellite, for example, though we do not really believe that a dozen such are going to help the islanders greatly on Boat Race Day, at Lord's or Wimbledon. There is, or will be, they say, the Telephone Satellite and the Telegram Satellite, which will make all those tiresome cables under the sea—and even the ordinary old-fashioned radio—redundant. Or, without the worry of satellites, we may make our Greetings Telegrams and unnecessary conversations bounce off the Moon or Mars. Very well. Go ahead.

But what about the Entertainment Satellites? It is assumed by many careless thinkers that any improvement in communications must bring benefit not only to civilization, etc., but also to those whose joy or business it is to entertain or enlighten their fellows, by words, music, art or acting. This is not

always so. The death, or moribundity, of dear old Variety is a sad example. In the good old days—and they were pretty good—the popular comedian could keep going for twenty years on a single turn, or perhaps two or three. All the year he travelled slowly round the country doing "The Gas-Oven," or "Ma-in-Law," at Brighton, at the Empire, London, at Nottingham, at Manchester, at Newcastle, at Edinburgh, at Glasgow, and perhaps still farther north. By the time he got back to Brighton a new generation of entertainment fodder had grown up who had never seen him do "The Gas-Oven," and those who had were glad to see him do it again.

But all these mechanical and radiotic appliances have put an end to that. Rash man, he made a record of "The Gas-Oven"; worse still he did it on the air: and now he can never do it again, for everyone has a disc of it or has seen it on the telly. So one after the other the music-halls come down and "The Gas-Oven" is heard no more.

That may not worry you. You have your lovely telly. But now the frantic men who serve it are expected to produce something just as good and mirth-making as "The Gas-Oven," not merely every day but two or three times a day: and this is quite impossible. There is not so much fun in this still finite world. Even if now and then they smashingly succeed, their success dries like a May-fly: for everyone everywhere has "seen it before," and rarely do they dare to do it again. And you, spoiled darlings, complain that so much air-time is taken up with Quiz and Acquisitive Programmes. You should think yourselves lucky if you get one laugh every week.

Further, as we said soon after the South African War, "Easy communications corrupt good manners." Especially they make it much easier to steal. Even an ordinary book-contract now extends for miles: and a play or film-contract goes on for almost ever. There are so many different things that can be done to a work, so many ways and places in which copyright can be infringed—publication, performing, mechanical, dramatic, translation and what-not. A has some of the rights in England and B a few in America, and some of these they share, but not in Norway. Agents, with proper caution, allow for every possible contingency, and it is a wonder that the contracts ever end. But the most imaginative agent cannot always provide for modern machines and developments. Parliament, when it made the elaborate Copyright Act 1956, did not foresee the hard-binding of paper-backs for schools and libraries. The coming of the Gram-and-Radio Age tore the guts out of the sale of sheet-music: but Performing Right and the Society of that name came to the aid of the musical composer, author and publisher. But here comes the clever tape-recorder. The publican entertains his customers with music pilfered from the B.B.C. or a borrowed record. The teenager, instead of buying an expensive record, tapes good music in his bedroom. Splendid, of course, that so many new minds are learning to like good music—and books: but the ordinary composer and musician is not prospering *pari passu*—not to mention the ordinary author or actor. Never mind: the agents, and the Societies, are doing their best for him.

But what a job is waiting for them in the sky, when Astro, Luno—well, let's call it Celotelecommunication—gets going! On the day the first Sputnik went into orbit, three years ago, the poet H. wrote:

*Lord, what a mess the firmament will be
When every nation boasts of two or three.
Loud-hailers next? For all that we can
tell*

*The sky-flies will be taught to talk as
well:*

*And monsters, motionless, above the town
Will bellow threats and propaganda
down.*

We won't bet about the loud-hailers, but the stationary monster is not only predicted but desired by a serious scientist or two. Professor Somebody said in 1958 that the Russians will send up television and radio satellite-stations "all over the Middle East": and if we do not do the same it will mean that Russian, not English, will become the common language of the backward races. Well, there you are—Celestial Television for the Schools!

But what about celestial entertainment—and celestial copyright? At present it is still possible for a British comedian, lecturer, or politician to get a hearing, and even a laugh, in the States or Canada with material that has been done to death in his native land. But when the Celotelly is established we can see the tragedy of "The Gas-Oven" enacted on a cosmic scale. No

joke will be new anywhere. The British comic in Australia will be told "Oh yes, I heard that on the Luno Telly." And all the agents will go mad. They may sell the celestial video-rights in a play to the Scandinavian countries: but will they be sure that they are not being pirated by Germany or Russia? They may grant mechanical rights in a symphony to the United States: but what if every teenager in Japan can catch and keep the music on his tape-machine?

This morning, in the news, we see one way out. The poet H., it seems, was not far out when he spoke of a satellite "mess." There are, it seems, to be inter-satellite battles or bumping-races. "The United States Air Force is starting a £25 million programme to find out how to destroy a satellite once it is in orbit." We are delighted: indeed, we asked for this to be arranged two years ago. First, a sort of reconnaissance sat. will snuggle up to the suspected sat. "inspect the target and decide whether it is innocent or hostile." Then a destroyer sat. will move in. Excellent. There will be a number of Copyright Inspector Satellites (run by UNESCO, perhaps) nosing about like B.B.C. vans and hounding down the copyright-breachers. If necessary they will order a pirate sat. to be sunk. What fun!

What they will do about the Moon and Mars we cannot tell.

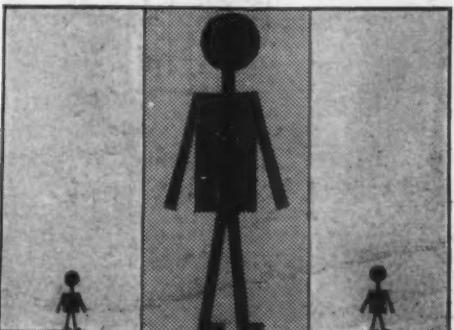


"Acme Signs? Listen, this is urgent."

MEET Mr. SPUD



Every British housewife knows the miracle of Fish Fingers—ready-to-fry, no bones, no nasty tang of the sea, no difference between one gay packet and the next. And there are other miracles—the wrapped sliced loaf, soft for ever, and the broiler chicken, tender however you cook it. Now meet a new miracle. Meet Mr. Spud, the Prepared Potato. Mr. Spud is square for easy packing and stacking, pops out of his skin in one simple movement (no peeler, no scrubbing) and cooks in three minutes.



Out of
Every
Hundred
People

5 like the taste of
earth

87 like Mr. Spud's
neutral taste

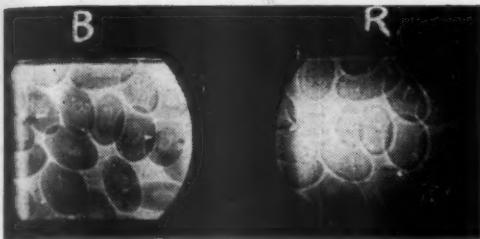
8 like the taste of
potato

MR. SPUD was born in a field, like any other potato. But he doesn't look like any other potato—oh no. An ordinary potato is nobby and difficult to peel. Just look at that ugly great brute Mr. Spud is leaning on at the top of the page. Just think of the precious man-hours (not to mention housewife hours) that have been wasted (*Picture 1*) by whole armies peeling potatoes like that. And even if an ordinary potato is round it may have hidden defects (*Picture 2*) and it may taste of almost anything. Not many people like their potatoes to taste of earth, and not many like them to taste too much of potato (*Picture 3*).

Neither of these tastes can occur in Mr. Spud, because when he was harvested he was taken to Processed Agricultural Products' laboratories at Watford and inspected under P.A.P.'s marvellous Stereoscopic Telefractor, which magnified him 20,000 times so that the scientists could actually see his taste cells (*Picture 4*). Here any potatoes that contain too many earthy or potatoey cells are rejected, leaving only those which can give Mr. Spud his famous "Neutral" flavour. More people like this flavour than either the taste of earth or potato (*Picture 3 again*). Mr. Spud passed this test, of course, and then began a really exciting time.

Up till now Mr. Spud had been round, and that would never do. Round potatoes have to be put in ugly heaps, won't fit neatly into a gay gift package, and are difficult to roast or fry evenly. How much easier if Mr. Spud were square! So he and all his little brothers were boiled for eight hours and dried in hot air. This process broke them down into the daintiest little bits. Next they passed along an enormous belt under the scrutiny of white-coated experts (*Picture 5*) into a delicious bath of agglutinin, where they became all stuck together. That, of course, would never do either, so Mr. Spud and his brothers moved on to a wonderful machine called a Continuous Strip Solidifier (*Picture 6*) which turned them into one long easy-to-handle ribbon, just right for feeding the supersensitive power presses which turn Mr. Spud into the shape you know him on your dinner table.

Meanwhile Mr. Spud's friends, the scientists of P.A.P., had not been idle. Market research had told them that some people like their potatoes to taste of something, and what better opportunity to endow Mr. Spud with delicious flavours that no potato had ever tasted of before? So some of Mr. Spud's brothers now taste of bacon, some of onion, and some of cheese 'n' tomato. Most people (eighty-seven

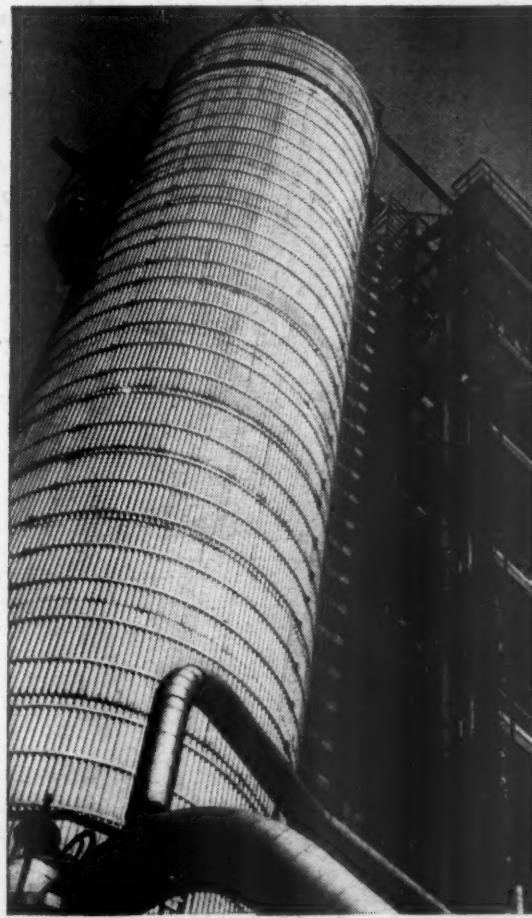


out of a hundred according to market research specialists) of course prefer Mr. Spud's own wonderful neutral flavour. For those who still like their potatoes to taste of potato, P.A.P. invented a new synthetic wonder-flavour, Potatene, which is continually compared for accuracy with ordinary potatoes by skilled tasters (Picture 7). That makes five gorgeous flavours, enough to suit any taste, all ready to bring piping hot to your table.

All that remained to do now was to slip Mr. Spud into his new polybomazine skin and store him and his brothers in enormous towers (Picture 8). Each of these contains enough Mr. Spuds to feed a city the size of Hull for seven weeks. And however long he stays there he will come out perfectly fresh and ready for you to eat, because he contains the secret formula Tithonin-X, which will make him last for ever and ever.

(Don't miss next week's wonderful Processed Agricultural Product, the new Homogenized Strawberry.)

815



Patterns from the past for SF writers of the future



Joyce in Space

By B. A. YOUNG

TALL cornhaired Mick Flaherty eased up the leather-patched sleeve of his coat to observe the watch on his wrist. His left wrist. The watch, secured by two hasps to a leather strap, told him five minutes past twelve. Or seven. Two minutes slow, is it? Oh, well. Too early for lunch anyway. All the same. All these people. What doing? Ask.

Mick Flaherty stopped a schoolboy walkrunning on the pavement past Saint Joseph's National school.

- Where are you going?
- The rocket. To see the rocket.
- The rocket?
- The Russian rocket.

Russian rocket. People believe anything. Tartar hordes in the Kremlin. Snow on their. Sending dogs up in airtight capsules. Nowhere to go walkies. Must be some arrangement made.

- Thank you, son.
- O.K.



He watched the boy hurry on, slipping nimbly into small gaps between the groups that moved, all one way, his way, on the pavement.

The rocket, Martian not Russian, lay at the foot of a fifty-million-mile parabola in a pit outside the Belfast and Oriental Tea Company in Westland row. Silvercoloured oxidised cylinder sharing shallow shellhole with Police-constable Murnan, on guard, and a packet once containing detergent: New Formula Sproo Washes Clean All Through. At the top end a circular manhole. Man inside. From Russia? No. Be on the telly. China, then? India? The Congo?

*Lumumba, Lumumba
The Fifth of Novumba.*

Mick Flaherty watched, teetering on heightseeking toes, saw nothing, walked on to the door of Conway's, hesitated, went in.

With ineluctable certitude the manholecover screwed itself loose from the inside and Xrezak came out.

* * * * *

— The doctrines of natural law, Stephen said, developed, by saint Thomas Aquinas most of all among the schoolmen, from Aristotelian metaphysics and Christian theology, insist that human behaviour may be tested by principles not man-made but discernible by reason.

Buck Mulligan, plump horseface rosewreathed in smiles, waved graciously from the window.

— O, by reason.

— Such principles, Stephen went on, comprise a natural law against which all manmade law may be measured.

Xrezak with ineluctable certitude climbed from the pit, past fearstruck openmouthed Policeconstable Murnan, through the crowd, courteously backfalling. Built-in electronic brain, no, machinery, impelled him (it?) to seek out intelligent beings. Fully transistorized of course. The greatest wonder of the. Ask at your. But not brain. Computer. Automatic. 123456789. 135792468. 657483921. Where to? Library, naturally. Hub of terrestrial learning. 871649532. Agenbite of inwit.

Stephen raised a hand, blackfingernailed, to the back of his neck and scratched an area of skin approximately one-and-a-half inches above his collar.

— Kant is unable to agree with Hume, and with Hume's

later followers, in their belief that all judgments must be either analytic, and therefore *a priori*, or synthetic *a posteriori*.

— Hume and his followers, Buck Mulligan said. O, rocks! Rocks. Rock of ages. Lettered all through.

I'm gonna rock around the clock tonight,

I'm gonna rock, rock, rock in the pale moonlight.

The door opened, not completely but adequately. Enter to them Xrezak.

— Kant on the other hand, Stephen went on, unperturbed by the invasion, believes that synthetic *a priori* judgments are to be found in mathematics and science, and in morality.

— Morality, Buck Mulligan repeated. O, there's the lovely word!

— For example, I proffer you the judgment, *Every event has a cause.*

— Lunchtime, said Buck Mulligan loudly, turning his trouser pockets insideout to reveal the total lack of money.

Lunchtime. The tocsin of the.

Un aura amorosa

Del nostro tesoro,

Un dolce ristoro . . .

Xrezak, observant by the door, slipped into reverse. 235946187. 129384756. 864297531. Sole business to seek out intelligent beings. Only communicate. With whom? With Mars. To threaten and command. 987654321.

— Kant therefore posed the question, How are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible?

— A very hard question, Buck Mulligan said. O, a very hard question.

Un dolce ristoro. Al cuor porgerà.

Xrezak, in reverse, exit. Door closed.

Rock around the.

* * * * *

Acting upon information received, he proceeded to the neighbourhood of the Ormond bar, where he proceeded to take up a position from which he was able to keep the entrance under observation while himself (itself?) remaining out of sight.

Lenehan across the counter asked for refreshment as if for intimacy.

— A bowl of sherry wine, sweet.

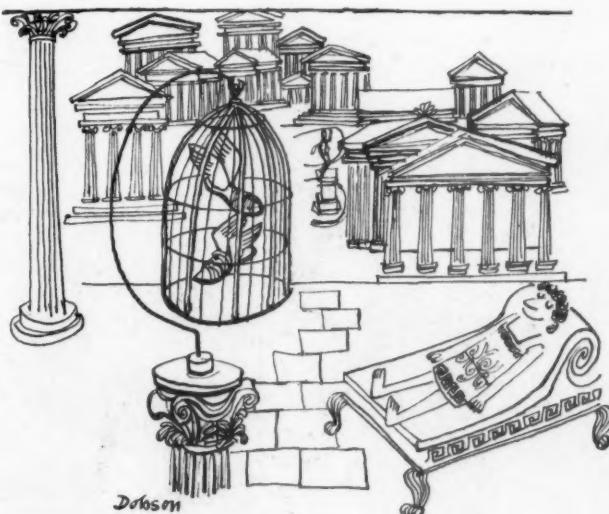
Miss Douce, gold, smiling, laid aside her book to comply. No moaning at the. Sherry. Fine old Solera.

Blazes Boylan, a patina of Cointreau glazing his lips, called from the saloon.

— Have you heard about the rocket?

— O, the rocket.

— They say it's from the Russians.



The Tartar hordes. Snow on.

Bloom, alone, lonely, happened to know. As a matter of fact, I was hearing. A fellow in close touch. The Americans. Cape Canaveral.

— A guided missile.

— Is there a man in it? Miss Douce shuddered delectably.

— O, a girl in it, Lenehan said. The boy that put the miss in missile.

Put the miss in more than that.

Miss Douce, giggling, tossed her head. O you men!

He then proceeded to enter the bar, taking precautions against being recognized, in order to overhear the conversation more clearly.

No, but I heard quite definitely. Of course it's not official yet but. After all, what else could.

— There's a rumour, Boylan said, that it came from outer space.

Miss Douce shivered. Creepy. Giant radioactive vegetables. Even an H-bomb can't touch them. What are we to do? Send for Professor.

— Outer space is it? Lenehan said. My foot!

As it happens I know for a fact. Perfectly harmless. Impossible to land from outer space. Sound barrier. Skin friction.

— Let's keep the party clean, Boylan rebuked.

At this point he proceeded to proceed out of the bar, having

heard sufficient, and proceeded in a westerly direction towards Westland row. Automatic reaction, of course. Punch in the data, must react to any given set of. Wonderful what they.

Policeconstable Macfadden, relieving Policeconstable Murnan, saw Xrezak caterpillarwalk past the Belfast and Oriental Tea Company, through, or that is to say between, respectful onlookers courteously backfalling (the tourist industry, you know), into the pit. Zzzzunk! I had no orders about. It seemed to me. Quite right, constable.

Manhole (man?) screwed tight behind.

Clever boyos, these Russkies. Teach us a thing or two.

Xrezak, complex of electronic impulses, no intelligence at all actually, submitted report to control station. 312495867. 645321798. Sir. I have the honour. 498726153. 136254978. 692381754. 817962543. Your obedient servant.

Silvercoloured cylinder reversed drive, motive power unknown, and set course on a one hundred and eighty million-mile parabola, elongated by the effects of syzygy. Wheeeee! Across the ether the electronic message sped. No intelligent life on this planet. The departure, witnessed by thousands, was happily completed in time for the late editions of the evening newspapers.

Coming :

D. H. LAWRENCE and ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Man in Office

by Larry



Summoned by Shop

By LESLIE MARSH

SO much of John Betjeman's life has been heard, viewed and read lately that perhaps an authentic and entirely unknown fragment may be added. It is a sad episode about the failure of a funny column.

Nearly thirty years ago when we were both on the *Evening Standard* we were detailed to produce this feature which was to appear nightly on the last page of the paper, something cheerful to take readers' minds off the Polish Corridor, the Yo-Yo craze, the proposed revision of the Prayer Book and other duodenal ulcer-breeders of that period. The title was agreed—it was the only aspect of this matter that ever was: "Good Evening," to suggest a smiling farewell salute, a sweet after the gorge of savoury news.

Betjeman was there for the West End public; he was the lad with the delicate air. I was brought in as a sort of roughage element, the matted fibrous material under the John Innes compost in the flowerpot, to get back to mother-in-law earth in case there was too much about Ronald Firbank and clerestories. Our joint signatures, reflecting this balance in a way, were fixed: "By Uffington and Penge." Uffington was John's Berkshire home; Penge was not mine but it had a reliable low-comedy ring (cf. music-hall song, "One girl's father came all the way from Penge. Once aboard the lugger he vowed he'd have revenge.")

We went up on the roof in Shoe Lane one afternoon to thrash the whole thing out before starting. Betjeman counted over a dozen church spires and told me some interesting sidelight on the incumbent, piscina, or reredos in every case, but then it was time for him to catch a train from Paddington.

Day after day for nearly a month we produced a dummy column between us, carefully writing the matter, getting it illustrated, cutting it to exact length and presenting it in the evening to the editor, Percy Cudlipp, who unfortunately had lately been a practising humorist himself. Though too busy

now writing leaders about Empire Free Trade and Mr. Baldwin he still knew the difference between funny and not.

The nightly inspection of the finished product was a macabre function. It was always late—seven o'clock or after—before poor Cudlipp could get away from angry circulation managers' complaints because there was no local bill for "Two Dead in Gas-filled Room at Wembley," lawyers' letters about grave reflections on client who at no time resided in "ramshackle" cottage as alleged, and influential society leader's indictment of poor selection of names of those present, or perhaps the dresses, at gay, amusing party the night before. (I was sub-editing the Woman's Page,

between times, and was never quite certain what ruchings were.) But when the last letter to the indignant reader at Dagenham apologizing for quite unintentional ambiguity in crossword clue had been signed, Cudlipp settled down, tired but conscientious, to study "Good Evening," usually in our presence. Sometimes it was in the office but more often in a pub—to postpone telephone calls from Lord Beaverbrook expressing forthright views on that night's Great Short Story.

He read the column, and we stood around as nonchalantly as possible, in silence. Greater trials have beset Cudlipp since, notably editing the *Daily Herald*, but I doubt if he ever suffered more concentrated bouts of pain than during those evening assays. The knitted frown of concentration always with him at work deepened into the furrow carved by physical pain. He never winced nor cried aloud. We fancied once that he muttered "Not bad" and we thought of the little

"Allow me to introduce myself—I'm being referred to as Mr. 'X'"



Spartan boy whose liver was being eaten by a fox. Sometimes his lips moved. At one moment I thought I caught him murmuring "Others, I am not the first" and supposed him to be seeing, Macbeth-like, a procession of dead editors of funny papers pass before his eyes. To break the uneasy silence, we, the judged, would now and then order another drink in an undertone or discuss *sotto voce* between ourselves some irrelevant subject: was the Italian threat to Abyssinia as real as some believed? But there was never a word of criticism. Nor of false flattery. Afterwards Cudlipp would look anxiously at his watch and the White Paper on Depressed Areas he was often carrying, and excuse himself.

I forget now exactly how we were told to resume our normal duties. No one said crudely that the project had been dropped, but Betjeman went back to his film-reviewing and I to making sure, among other things, that the paragraph in the Londoner's Diary about Major "Fruity" Metcalfe was all right. Seen at this distance of time the interlude takes on the quality of a very sentimental song of those days about a little girl who was fond of gardening and died young:

*And in that neglected garden, out of reach of sun and shower,
Sleep all a mother's hopes and dreams that never came to flower.*

This was one of our very early chrysanthemums, nipped by frost.



"Tch, tch, such wasteful people these Wedgwood Benns."

M

I WENT on pilgrimage from A to Z.

One day a spirit came to me and said:

"Look, here is M; a smiling place, though small.

Why do you want to go to Z at all?

"For here at M are many things of worth.

Here are the mansions of the middle earth.

Here are deep meadows where the murmurous bee Hums, muted, his melodious middle C.

"Here all is measured. Here the weird and wild Shrink to the meek, the mollified, the mild.

The lake becomes a mere, the peak a mound, And both merge smoothly in the middle ground.

"Here men, once fretted by delirious dreams, Find out that everything is what it seems, That anything immoderate is odd, And Money is the middle name of God.

"While madcap maidens, amplified by time, Enter the mellow temple of their prime, And are transmuted, and made manifest As mink-clad matrons from the Middle West.

"Mitten and muffler, muffin, macaroon Mock the diminished magic of the moon. Here is mid-morning. Here is merry May Without its madness; here's the Middle Way.

"Look upon those who strove to get to Z! Why, most of them are prematurely dead; The others, dizzy with a sense of doom, Zealously towards the zenith buzz and zoom.

"Yet, Z being once attained, their journey's done, With no more mysteries beneath the sun. Then stay at M, for N holds nothing new; Why opt for O or P, or quest for Q?

"Pitch here at M your unambitious tent, And pass your days in mirth and merriment. Sit here and muse on this unmoving stage, Be calmed in an eternal middle age."

"Thank you; you are extremely kind," I said, And zigzagged on, along the road to Z.

— R. P. LISTER

Essence of Parliament

HERE has been a good deal about defence at various levels of seriousness. On Friday Mr. Profumo and Mr. Ramsden had to do their best to hold the fort for the Government's recruiting policy. From the Socialist benches Mr. George Brown accused them of "double talk" and Colonel Wigg demanded commitments in proportion to our forces. But the Conservative critics were, if anything, sharper. Sir Fitzroy Maclean claimed that "the cart had been put firmly before the horse." Mr. John Hall complained of "Tweedledee" logic. "Contrariwise, if it was not so it might be, and if it were so it would be, but as it isn't it ain't." Mr. Brian Harrison traced all our calamities from the White Paper of 1957. By Wednesday recruiting was up again in a slightly less grave context. A too enthusiastic officer at Gillingham had, it seemed, been offering bounties to any of his soldiers who brought in any new recruits, and as a result no fewer than two had been obtained. Mr. Profumo commended the officer for showing initiative but could not approve of this particular scheme. There was once a bishop who, it was alleged, ruled concerning the ritualistic practices of one of his clergy that his actions "were highly pleasing to the Almighty and on no account to be repeated." Substituting Mr. Profumo for God, that seemed to be much the position of this unfortunate but emphatically non-nitwitted officer. But the real fun of defence is to come. The luck of the ballot for notices of motions has gone to Mr. Harold Davies, who will launch a full dress debate on Holy Loch on Friday week. There were stony faces on the Socialist front bench as Mr. Davies's good fortune was announced.

The comments of this column a fortnight ago on Sir Thomas Moore have apparently given him pain for which it is deeply sorry. But if Sir Thomas reads it again he will, we fancy, find that it by no means said what he imagined it to have said. Far from denying that there was a large company that was of his way of thinking on corporal punishment, we explicitly said that probably the majority of public opinion was on his side. Our comment was simply on the inevitable penalty which the House of Commons exacts

Fresh Light on Sir Thomas Moore for persistency—that someone who insists on going on and on about a particular topic inevitably comes to be regarded as rather funny. We did not particularly commend this foible of the House—and indeed of the nation. We recorded it. No one can surely seriously deny that it is so. Perhaps as Mr. Butler quoted from Sydney Smith in a slightly different context, "the sovereign people is beastly," but that's the way it is. Thus Mr. James Hudson was always a popular figure with all his fellow-Members. Many of them were willing to go at any rate some of the way with him in his views on temperance, but no one, I think, could deny that they found something funny in his persistent airing of them on any and every occasion. Mr. George Thomas hardly yields to Mr.

Hudson in the fervour of his temperance views. But he is a wiser tactician. He does not air them so often and therefore when they are aired they are more effective, but the suggestion of local option polls about Sunday opening in Wales was one occasion for their airing, and his vigorous and amusing speech brought to life a somewhat soporific debate on the Licensing Bill—a bill whose embers had not even been stirred by the Deputy Speaker's calling of Mr. Gardner when Mr. Gardner did not happen to be one of the twenty-five or so Members who were trying to catch his eye. Indeed he was not, it seems, in the Chamber at the time.

The only trouble about the Welsh is that they have not got enough names to go round. Griffiths and Williamses and Joneses are bad enough, but this week has been Thomases' week. Thomases on every hand, and not, it seemed, a doubt between them. No sooner had Mr. George Thomas of Cardiff got through with denouncing the Licensing Bill than there was Mr. Iorweth Thomas of Rhondda saying in an equally amusing speech

how good a bill it was; and then, to

top it all off, came another Thomas, Sir Lynn Ungoed-Thomas, to introduce the Wedgwood Benn petition. Do they never end? The House is always more interested in personalities than in measures, and it would be a mild understatement to say that there was more excitement about Mr. Wedgwood Benn than there was either about the Licensing Bill or the Rating Bill or indeed even National Assistance. On Tuesday Mr. Wedgwood Benn sat up strained and nervous in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery. Was he a lord? Was he a commoner? Was he a stranger? Who shall say? At any rate he was Distinguished, and some wary attendant, determined not to be at fault however things might turn out, had on a card placed in his seat written "Mr. Wedgwood Benn" and had written it in pencil so that if the worst came to the worst, or the best to the best, according to one's prejudice, he could presumably rub out Mr. Wedgwood Benn with indiarubber and substitute "Lord Stansgate" in indelible ink in its stead. Mr. Wedgwood Benn or Lord Stansgate or whatever his name may be appeared to be a little impatient and annoyed with those of his former colleagues who insisted on asking questions. He wanted them to get on with the business of ignobling him. Round One went to him all right. The Committee of Privileges will examine his case, but the general impression is that the House sympathizes with him but that it will turn out that he cannot get his way without legislation.

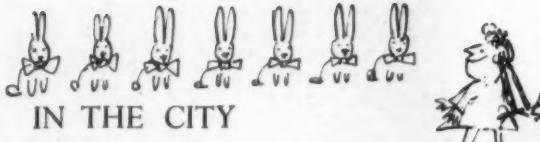
That interlude over, we had another session on the Licensing Bill. The debate had moved on from Welsh Sundays to clubs. One man's club is another man's poison, and everyone always sneers at the clubs to which he does not happen to belong. It is no part of the duty of this column personally to investigate all the drinking clubs in Britain, but no doubt there are some pretty lousy joints around if only one knows where to look for them. The Street Offences Bill swept the dirt under the carpet and now there are those who think that it is time to take the carpet up. The Whips were off and left Members free to back their fancy. As a result, what with clubs and Sunday opening, when it came to a division the Socialists split—roughly but not exactly—on the lines of England versus Wales.

After Licensing, Rating, important as it doubtless is, is not (as Mr. Henry Brooke frankly confessed) a diverting subject. Those who had come for diversion had to content themselves by watching how far across his back Mr. Mitchison was going to be able to stretch his left hand.

—PERCY SOMERSET



MR. HENRY BROOKE



Defaulters' Roster

THE hire purchase finance companies have been running into serious trouble. Rumours of their losses were in large part responsible for the deplorable performance of stock markets on some recent days.

The competition for business in the days of hire purchase's free-for-all led to some irresponsible abuses. In the days of the boom in motor-cars and the domestic appliances trade, nothing, it would appear, could go wrong. In the struggle for expansion on the part of these very dynamic institutions, reasonable restraints were in many cases thrown to the winds. Contracts were extended over far too long a period and no down-payments were charged. The golden rule, that in the event of trouble the value of a repossessed article should equal at least the amount of the outstanding debt, was disregarded.

This freedom opened the door to a modicum of fraud and near fraud—as for example on the part of the fly-by-night bombed-site second-hand car dealers, who were allowed to launch their rather shoddy glitter with the help of block discount facilities. When they could not sell the cars, they vanished and the repossessed articles are cluttering the finance companies' storage facilities. If ever sold, they will fetch a great deal less than the amounts advanced on them.

When the next batch of accounts are published by hire purchase finance houses they will provide some shocks, not only in their tale of the past year's profit and loss accounts but also in the substantial provisions that will have to be made for future bad and doubtful debts.

The investing public should, however, make a distinction between the substantial fall in prices of the shares of these companies and the security of deposits made with them. In the latter respect all the big companies appear to be safe. They may treat their shareholders roughly in the next few months, but their depositors are likely to emerge from this episode with no worse than slightly frayed nerves.

The experience will have proved salutary in the extreme. There will be no more real free-for-all. Even if the Government were ill advised enough to remove all shackles on hire purchase

credit facilities, the vast bulk of the companies concerned would impose their own code of restrictions.

Many of these companies are taking action to improve the sources of credit information on which they have to work. Too many recent losses have been due to contracts with customers who have extended their commitments to the point of irresponsibility and in some cases dishonesty. As a result a consortium of seven of the major finance houses have decided to set up a nationwide information service to cover everyone's credit rating for hire purchase.

The members of this group are Bowmaker, British Wagon, Lombank, Mercantile Credit, North Central Wagon, Olds Discount and Scottish

Midland Guarantee Trust. They are shortly to acquire the publishers of *Kemp's Gazette* and will feed into that organization all the credit information in their possession. In due course this will provide a national coverage of credit ratings which will be available to all who care to make use of it.

Recent mistakes should not be allowed to smear the prospects of hire purchase business. It has become part of the established order of our affluent, if somewhat improvident, society. It will be surprising if, when the accounts for the present difficult period are closed, the losses are found to amount to much more than 1 per cent of the turnover. In a trade where the true rate of interest rises up to 15 per cent, this need not be a killing dose. All things considered, an investor with cash to spare could do worse than buy shares of the United Dominions Trust, Mercantile Credit, Bowmaker and Lombard Banking at the levels to which they have recently fallen.

— LOMBARD LANE



Rabbit Breeding

NOT long ago an hotel proprietor put rabbit on the menu. To his astonishment eight out of his first ten customers chose it.

Dispirited with producing thousands of chicken for the table and getting a lower price every time, some broiler growers are turning to rabbits. In fact they are quite prepared to pay 100 guineas for ten does and a buck to start them off in a small way of business.

These rabbits should pay handsome dividends. It is planned that each doe should have four litters a year with about nine young in each litter. The young will be sold when they reach about 3 lb. after only eight weeks. Some quick mental arithmetic will reveal that does should be capable of producing about one hundredweight of rabbits in a year. There should, therefore, be a profit in rabbit breeding on this scale.

In fact because few of us have had much chance to taste rabbit for some years the prices in the shops at the moment are higher than for chicken.

But that situation is unlikely to last long. Almost everybody is still concentrating on breeding rabbits for stock, so as yet comparatively few are coming to the shops. In four or five years' time,

however, it is expected that there will be about 75 to 100 million of these specially bred rabbits sold every year. The only problem then will be finding the people to buy them all.

There is a good deal of discussion and argument at the moment as to which will prove the best breed. I rather like the sound of the Rex Ermines, for their pelts will sell at about £1 each. One should be able to turn an honest penny by breeding them. But I suppose that just as the million-a-year mark was reached women's fashions would change and that would be the end of the enterprise. Anyway it is a thought.

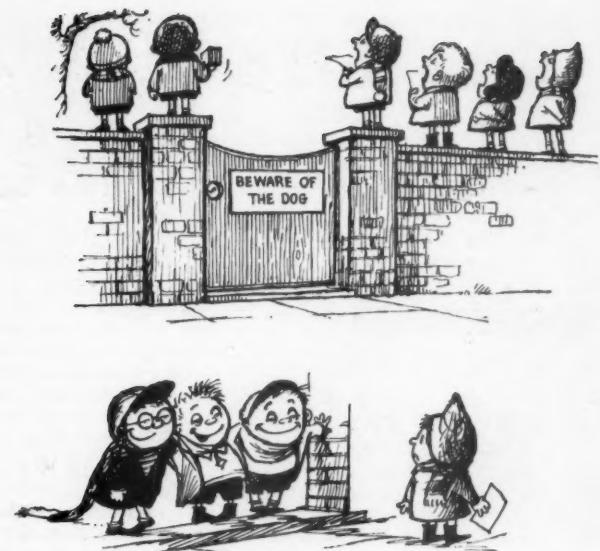
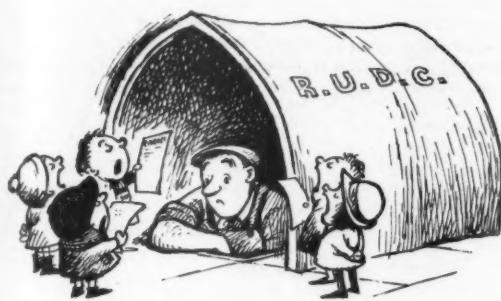
The curious point about the whole affair is that the Government is spending large sums of our money, for better or for worse, on trying to keep down or stamp out our wild rabbits. And now big business seems to be stepping in to produce far more in a year than ever used to reach the market.

It is all a question of hard cash. The Ministry of Agriculture point a reprobating finger at our wild rabbit and say, quite rightly, that it causes more damage than it is worth.

All the same it seems a pity to be so two-faced about rabbits when it is only a matter of a few million pounds.

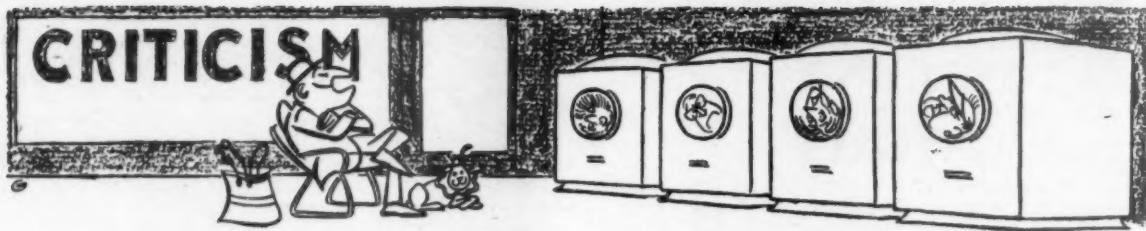
— JOHN GASELEE

SILENT NIGHT



"It's a throat lozenge."

thelwell



AT THE PLAY

The Bride Comes Back (VAUDEVILLE)

HERE is a moment in *The Bride Comes Back* to be treasured by all those with a grateful memory of the comic glories of the Hulberts. After a huge expenditure of Christmas frivolities Cicely Courtneidge and Jack Hulbert are on their knees trying to stuff spring snakes into a waste-paper basket, and as fast as they do so the snakes jump out again, until at last they think of cramming a cushion on the basket. This is the kind of dividend which this play, a successor to *The Bride and the Bachelor*, will bring the simple-minded. It is an entertainment for innocents uncorrupted by kitchen-sink drama and beatnik profundities, and it is no good being clever about its shortcomings, for it fills a need and will please the young and will probably run just as long as its predecessor. Nor is it any use grumbling that

in Ronald Millar we have for the moment lost a dramatist of talent.

It is a great pleasure to see Mr. Hulbert's youthful elegance again, even if he is largely wasted. His timing—and Miss Courtneidge's—is still a thing of splendour. Just to watch the Hulberts and Robertson Hare at work is to be given a lesson in highly professional fooling. But I wish, not in any curmudgeonly way, that *The Bride Comes Back* was not so terribly thin. The simple-minded will find plenty to laugh at, as did the audience around me, but it must be admitted that there are some glaringly flat spots. The witchdoctor's bowl that saved the Kilpatrick's bacon in *The Bride and the Bachelor* is used again, to bring help to their daughter Serena's tottering marriage. On Christmas Eve their house is invaded by a psychiatrist, Mr. Hulbert, and a muscular girl with amnesia and a passion for smashing crockery, Angela Browne. She makes a bee-line for Mr. Kilpatrick—Mr. Hare sputtering furiously—and is out to murder his wife—Miss Courtneidge—who

REP. SELECTION

Castle, Farnham, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, until December 10.
Civic, Chesterfield, *The Cat and the Canary*, until December 10.
Playhouse, Sheffield, *The Reluctant Debutante*, until December 17.
Library, Manchester, *The Other Cinderella*, until February 4.

grows more and more frantic. Miss Courtneidge comes best out of this very patchy evening, working like a beaver and using all her skill to keep its small balloon aloft.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)
Ross (Haymarket—18/5/60), Rattigan and Guinness. *A Man for all Seasons* (Globe—13/7/60), Paul Scofield as Sir Thomas More. *And Another Thing* (Fortune—19/10/60), bright new revue.

—ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

L'Avventura *I Aim at the Stars* *The Plunderers*

THIS time there's one that divides the filmgoing public very definitely, and I'm on the minority side of the line. *L'Avventura* (Director: Michelangelo Antonioni) held my attention for nearly two and a half hours with no trouble at all, and I want to see it again; but even the press show was punctuated with more or less furtive departures. The people who left, I judged them (and reading printed opinions makes it certain), were those who become impatient and angry when there is no obvious conventional pattern in a narrative. I would compare them, though they would protest, with the people who find O. Henry a more satisfying story-writer than Chekhov.

To me, *L'Avventura* seemed profoundly, brilliantly impressive, atmospheric, haunting, filling the mind with its flavour in the way of a long, leisurely-read novel. No film of a novel ever did this for me; the adapted time-scheme never works. But here the time mysteriously seems like real time.

Of course the "story" sounds like nothing when one tries to summarize it: this is a film, made to be appreciated as a film. It begins with a yachting party among the Aeolian islands, where one of the girls disappears. There is a long search for her; her fiancé Sandro (with whom she had



The Bride Comes Back!

Smith—JACK HULBERT

Jason Kilpatrick—ROBERTSON HARE

quarrelled) and her friend Claudia continue it when they get back to the mainland, realizing soon that something other than this is keeping them together. They become lovers, and then, gradually, Claudia sees a situation repeated: Sandro is making her miserable now. At the fadeout, the signs are of a reconciliation, after a climax of infidelity and bitter regret.

Say what you like, there is a pattern, a subtle and interesting film pattern; that words can't convey it proves nothing. Would you judge a tapestry, or a taste, from a description? All I can say is that I found the whole thing fascinating. The early episode on the island, the feeling of the sea and the open air (brilliant use of natural sound), the placing of tiny hints to convey the atmosphere of rising apprehension, the growing realization that the girl is lost—all this is perfectly done, while we are getting to know the people concerned. The surface detail throughout is similarly convincing and entertaining, but the point is mood and character.

Objectors complain that the disappear-

ance of the girl is not explained. Why should it be, in a film about "the adventure" of two other people?

I can't say much that's kind about *I Aim at the Stars* (Director: J. Lee Thompson). I don't mean I take the stern high-minded line we've grown so familiar with ever since this picture was first heard of; I'd have no objection to a picture that made an enemy a sympathetic character. The trouble is that this doesn't make Wernher von Braun—or any of the others involved—a character at all. Like nearly all stories hampered by a strong basis of fact, it is lifeless: it can't come to life because the demands of fact insist at every turn that its people should behave not as creative imagination feels they would behave but as history says they did. It is essentially a series of animated illustrations, and what one remembers is the rare irrelevant oddity one wouldn't have thought of (U.S. officer to group of surrendered Germans: "Come with me for additional processing"). Curt Jurgens and the others do their best, but no.

The Western *The Plunderers* (Director: Joseph Pevney) has good points, but I was constantly distracted by the feeling that it was propagandist—politically propagandist and symbolic. This impression is reinforced by pompous warning introductory remarks and pompous moralizing closing remarks delivered off-screen in the voice of Jeff Chandler, who plays a dominant part in the film: This might be *your* town, remember, beware, don't underestimate the opposition, and so forth. But on the surface, it's quite an effective Western of what might preciously be called the fertilized-ovum kind: prairie town, enter vital strangers, disturbance, birth of new spirit. The point is that the four intruding strangers are very young men, so that the people of the little town—where only the old and uncaring are left—don't regard them seriously as a menace. Only after progressive and calculated violence and threatening behaviour has made everyone afraid of them is it realized that the problem should have been tackled earlier. Remind you of anything? The producers thought



it might . . . But it's perfectly easy to take as a straightforward story, and considerably more entertaining than *I Aim at the Stars*.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Showing with *L'Aventura* is an extremely funny sixteen-minute French cartoon, *La Joconde* (Director: Henri Gruel). Also in London: *Shadows* (27/7/60 and 26/10/60), *Jazz on a Summer's Day* (28/9/60), *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (9/11/60), *Black Orpheus* (8/6/60) for a little longer, *Never on Sunday* (30/11/60), *Can-Can* (30/3/60), *The Millionairess* (2/11/60), and Disney's *Jungle Cat* ("Survey," 9/11/60).

Not a single new release to mention—though there may be something good on the Rank circuit, which announces "selected reissues."

— RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR

Gifts from France

THE wind has lately been standing fair from France and one bright, saving grace of our season of monsoon Sundays has been the presence of *Jacky and Hermine* at tea-time. Ostensibly for the children, but better than much adult fare, each of their adventures has been told with a disarming simplicity and I hope the BBC has more such French imports to lighten the winter. The story goes that Marc de Gautyne, the writer and director, used *Jacky* and *Hermine*, children from local farms, in the first film of the series which he made in the forests of Tertre Rouge. He found them so good that he built the other six films around them. Their acting certainly has the unselfconscious charm of children at play and is refreshingly free from the usual drama-school gloss. Most of the action is shot in the open air against a background of sea-shore and big, clear skies and they laugh and scamper and ride across the sands of the Camargue with an abandon that helps old hearts to face the imminence of Monday morning.

Another pleasant gift from France has come our way recently in *Paris Music-Box* (BBC), the presentation by Alan Adair of the popular songs of the City sung in her streets and squares. This basic idea of filming French musical acts performing in romantic places is one that could easily have been spoilt by pretentious handling. It is rare to find restraint among producers when Parisian nostalgia is the keynote but in this *Music-Box* I think that sentiment has been kept on a reasonable rein and the locations have not been permitted ascendancy over the singers. The commère in the first show talked too much at times and was inclined to be over-arch, but the individual artists have all been most satisfying. They seem luckier in the available numbers than are the singers on our side of the Channel. Excepting the output of Lionel Bart our present songs seem written only for the juke-box, the essentials being a moronic beat, repetitive

words and a general crudity which can be mastered with minimum of musical talent. The songs from Paris are vastly more intelligent and varied in style, more adult in emotion and, where appropriate, they had a fine old music-hall jump. Nicole Louvier, on the sweeter side, sang charmingly to Victor Hugo through the pillars of the Place des Vosges, and Patachou came through with that harsh, garlic power in her song among the lovers on the park benches.

The depressing thought about the poverty of our own popular songs reminds me that, although it may merely be wishful thinking, I seem to have detected a small renaissance in this season of *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* (ATV). To fugitives from the programme I would report that only once in the past two months has the bill been topped by a juvenile male pop-singer; and then he had to share the lead with a lady comedian. The top line has been taken a number of times by artists qualified to do so, to wit, Max Bygraves, Howard Keel, Shirley Bassey and Dan Dailey. This may, I trust, indicate the decline of the exploited amateur and a trend back to talent at the top. It might even be a sign that the bills for this show will more frequently be of true Palladium repute and may even, one day, be purged of harassing compères and *Beat the Clock*. With the sound turned down to *Beat the Clock* and a newspaper hung over the screen to hide its profoundest



HENRY MOORE in "Monitor"

country. I would like to have included Eartha Kitt in the compliments, but she wasn't in her old form at all.

It is a reasonable even-money bet that if you see an evening programme on the commercial channel with educational overtones, it will come from Granada. Their Zoo unit's new series *The Animal Story* is concentrating on the smaller mammals, birds and insects but is overcoming any inferiority of size by blowing up their images to horror-film proportions. The head of a praying mantis at seventeen-inch dimension, swivel-eyed me and pondering my edibility will not easily leave my nightmares. Unless it is perhaps frightened away by the screen-full shot of a matamata's mouth coming at us like wet Quatermass or of a chameleon's beady eyes looking backwards and forwards at one and the same time. The episodes have all been fascinating and painlessly instructive and the commentary by Desmond Morris has been a model of its kind. He has been doing Zoo programmes for the children for a long time already, of course, and so we end where we came in, finding that the children so often get the good things of television first.

— PATRICK RYAN

Vision

INK was grey on the printed page,
Featureless faces adorned the stage,
But "Don't wear glasses," everyone said,
Even after I'd cut them dead.

Everyone told me "Don't wear Specs,"
So I peered at the world as through cracked Triplex
And wrote in a larger and larger fist—
Then yielded and went to an Ophthalmist.

*I know the people whom I meet;
Printer's ink is bold;
I wish I'd noticed those crow's feet
Before they got a hold.*

— G. E. CANN

BOOKING OFFICE

BAPUCRACY AND CRUSTOCRACY

By JOCELYN BROOKE

The Lotus and the Robot. Arthur Koestler. Hutchinson, 25/-

MR. KOESTLER recently visited India and Japan, not as a mere tourist but in the hope of finding an answer to the question which he—like many another—had often asked himself: could the “wisdom” of the East, as expressed in its philosophic and ethical systems, provide any sort of solution to the “perplexities and deadlocked problems” which confront us in the West? The answer, it may be said at once, proved to be a decided No; but the investigations which led Mr. Koestler to this conclusion are of the greatest interest and, incidentally, extremely entertaining.

He went first to India, where he interviewed various holy men and had many talks with psychiatrists, professors, students, and so forth; his general impression is that India at the present time is bedevilled by a perpetual conflict between native traditions which are slowly breaking down and Western ideas which are as yet imperfectly assimilated. Whether any final synthesis can ever take place seems to him doubtful; the real difference between East and West lies not merely in their contrasting philosophies but in a basically different way of thinking: the Indian, even when highly educated, is simply unable to grasp—except, as it were, in inverted commas—the process of ratiocination upon which our thought is based. Conversely, it is all but impossible for a Westerner to understand the evasive, highly subjective and seemingly wishful thought-processes of Hinduism in general and Yoga in particular: logical they may be, within their own restricted terms of reference—but so, after all, were the doctrines of sympathetic magic. To us, the syllogisms of the Yogi seem about as convincing as those of *Alice Through the Looking-glass* (which for that matter, according to Mr. Christmas Humphreys, Q.C., is an unacknowledged classic of Zen Buddhism).

Mr. Koestler points out that, psychologically speaking, the Hindu pantheon is defective in that it includes no father-figure. As a result the Indian male is habitually dominated by a human substitute: either his real father or some Guru or Swami. Gandhi fulfilled this function of Bapu (father) on a nationwide basis, so does Nehru; but this Bapucracy, as Mr. Koestler calls it, leads to timidity and lack of self-reliance as well as to widespread neurosis. In the matter of sex, one is surprised to learn, Indians are at least as neurotic as northern Europeans, if not more so; this is largely due to a belief that the seminal fluid has a mystical and supernatural value, and that the loss of it incurs not only physical but spiritual impoverishment. Fear of this loss accounts for a very large proportion of patients in the waiting-rooms of both Yogis and psychiatrists.

If Bapucracy is the dominant force in India, in Japan—according to Mr. Koestler—it is crustocracy. The word is mine not his, but his argument,

BEHIND THE SCENES



5—THE BOULTLING BROTHERS

Twin directors John and Roy have established a name for sophisticated British comedy

briefly, is that the Japanese character is closely linked with the country's “crustal instability”—i.e., its proneness to earthquakes. This produces, on the one hand, a tendency to unconsidered violence, on the other a highly artificial and stylized protective “crust,” expressed both in aesthetic terms (*Nô* plays, conventional flower-arrangement, etc.) and in social-ethical ones: the tea-ceremony, and all the manifold aspects of what Mr. Koestler calls “character-gardening”—that is to say, the infantile conditioning to a code of ethics based mainly on loss (or gain) of face.

Mr. Koestler was at first beguiled by much that he saw; he approved, for instance, of the sensible Japanese attitude to sex. But he was exasperated, far more than in India, by the reverse of the medal: the virtual identification of morality with convention, the awful dullness of most traditional art, and the more nonsensical aspects of Zen, which seemed to him nine-tenths phony. In Japan, the gulf between East and West yawns more widely than ever: the semantic ambiguity of the language is in itself an almost insurmountable barrier, and the best efforts on the part of a Japanese to write English are—as Mr. Koestler's examples show—barely up to eleven-plus standards.

Mr. Koestler sums up the cleavage between Europe and Asia by quoting William Haas, the German orientalist, who suggested that the word *philousia* (love of Essential Being) represents the Eastern approach to wisdom, as opposed to the Western *philosophia* (love of factual knowledge). Can the two modes of thought ever be reconciled? Probably not; but Mr. Koestler's researches were well worth making, and have resulted in an excellent and most stimulating book.

THE WOMEN WHO DID

Love and the English. Nina Epton. Cassell, 25/-

Things have changed, of course, since Victorian daughters were reproved for using the simple word “nightdress” in a gentleman's presence; things have changed since 1895 when *The Woman Who Did* shook society by its frankness: “Alan caught her in his arms and kissed her forehead tenderly. And thus was Herminia Barton's espousal consummated.” But however much things have changed, there remains, as Miss Epton says, “an almost eastern streak of modesty in us insofar as our love life is concerned.” The Chatterley case is enough to confirm her opinion.

In the sequel to *Love and the French*,

Miss Epton studies our own Anglo-Saxon attitudes to Cupid from the Middle Ages to the days of the Albemarle Committee. She has managed to do precisely what she did in her earlier book: to be serious but not academic, informative but not dull, highly entertaining but not, for a fleeting moment, what-the-butler-saw. What is my favourite story from the book? Is it the legend of the Englishwoman in the so-called Naughty Nineties, barred from a country hotel for wearing "bifurcated skirts"? Is it the melancholy tale of Basil Hodges and Lady Arundel? Is it the anecdote of Thackeray, locked up in his study and blushing as he wrote the love passages in his novels? I don't know, but in any case this is a book to read thoroughly, to dip into and to leave about the place for appreciative guests. Miss Epton does deserve congratulations.

— JOANNA RICHARDSON

NEW FICTION

Three Players of a Summer Game, and Other Stories. Tennessee Williams. Secker and Warburg, 18/-

Through Dooms of Love. Karl Stern. Hollis and Carter, 16/-

Self Made Man. Peter Forster. Hutchinson, 18/-

A Battle is Fought to be Won. Francis Clifford. Hamish Hamilton, 13/6

Anyone who is familiar with the plays of Tennessee Williams will be aware that, while they present always a strong dramatic experience, they do not always please the understanding. His themes are strong ones; he is concerned with human isolation, human cruelty, the lesions of the spirit. But a kind of perverse and fortuitous fate seems to work against the characters as if man is only interesting when he is suffering. In the present volume of short stories this hidden cruelty on the part of the story-teller becomes intensified because we have no dramatic distance.

Thus two of the stories in the present volume are, so to speak, glosses on two plays; the title story uses characters from *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and "Portrait of a Girl in Glass" is a sketch of *The Glass Menagerie*. Both tales are leaves from a psychiatrist's notebook, but because there is an "I," a storyteller, in them they become at once more cruel and more sentimental. Nearly all the stories are concerned with the damage of love and the negation of feeling. It goes without saying, however, that they are remarkably well written.

Most of the critics seem to have dismissed *Through Dooms of Love* as one of those fat American novels where an upset personality finally finds her way to love. It is in fact more than that. Like some of Nabokov's novels, it is a painful evocation of the world of exiled Europeans in America. It shows in a remarkable way the psychological rape done to the mind when people who have grown up in one world are forced into exile in another. The immensity of the damage done is shown with the effectiveness of Canetti's remarkable novel, *Auto da Fé*. I found it a most exceptional book, and its attempt to take

us into an understanding of the depth and value of human love is intense. At the same time the author prejudices the issue somewhat by his professional intervention; he is a psychiatrist, and in pointing to the religious solution he is prescribing treatment rather than resolving his fable.

Peter Forster is a social novelist and his gift is in the portraying of the flavour of contemporary English society. He is not a subtle craftsman and many of his effects are coarse; but *Self Made Man* is a most effective work precisely because of this. His hero, a man neither bad nor good, is caught between the deceits of the establishment and the trade unions in his attempt to build up a small business. In the end he leaves England for America, exhausted by the effort to live in a grim, pettifogging and unpleasant England in which everyone is out for his own advantage. It sounds like a reactionary lament, but it is more than that; Mr. Forster's criticisms go deep.

tion of cartoons from the 'fifties shows that if the master was somewhat less certain of himself in a decade of Cold War and *Never Had It So Good* domestic politics than in the hungry 'thirties and 'forties, he had no serious challenger as a pictorial political commentator. Always dramatic, always shrewd, his comments on the great events of *The Fearful Fifties* make a splendid, readable and immensely useful history of the period. The humour is versatile, ranging from pure buffoonery to the most telling satire. Of the two hundred cartoons my favourite is the picture of the moon-rocket that failed: it is captioned "The Small Boy in Us" and depicts the two aspects of our attitude to the space race—awe of the mighty atom and fantastic scientific progress, and our inner joy when Nature manages to put up some kind of opposition to man's desperately inquisitive probing. "Yah," we say, "missed it!"

— BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



I recommend this as a skilled piece of angry and concerned social criticism and as a realistic analysis of a broad sweep of our modern England.

Francis Clifford's sixth novel *A Battle is Fought to Be Won*, is a sparely-told tale about a former bank clerk who finds himself commanding a rifle company of Karens in Burma during the war. Its theme is the gradual extinction of humanity that is required of a man fighting an enemy capable of endless atrocities. The unprofessional soldier finally manages to find himself, like the hero of *The Red Badge of Courage*. But as in Crane's story we want I think to know more about the positives that a man must stifle if he is to reach the resolution the book commands.

— MALCOLM BRADBURY

LOW AND BEHOLD

The Fearful Fifties. David Low. Bodley Head, 20/-

It will surprise no one to learn that David Low writes extremely well—his autobiography and the famous *Years of Wrath* are evidence enough—or that he draws better than he writes. There is still after all these years only one Low, and this collec-

DOCTOR AT THE CROSSROADS

Doctor in Clover. Richard Gordon. Michael Joseph, 12/6

Dr. Simon Sparrow's old bar-crony Grimsdyke describes his early years as a locum of the wilder sort. The phrases are as inventive and the observation as unexpected as ever; but Dr. Gordon's attempt to escape from the fantastical reminiscence into a series of Wodehousian episodes suffers from weakness in plot.

Dr. Gordon's brighter fans recognize him as potentially one of the best living comic writers and this cheery pot-boiler simply is not good enough. He really must turn a deaf ear to accountants, publishers, film producers and bankers, send his wife out to work and his children into bondage, abandon his goldmine of frolics with nurses for a book or two and write something just to satisfy himself. The material of any man with his alert eye must be inexhaustible. What about giving rein to that sensitivity and concern which sometimes shows itself behind the lowbrow mask? Having waved him upwards towards starvation, I ought to mention that *Doctor in Clover* is fun.

— R. G. G. PRICE

ENGINEERS' GRAVEYARD

Lost Causes of Motoring. Lord Montagu of Beaulieu. *Cassells*, 30/-

In the course of a generation sixty-nine makes of British cars have vanished, some gloriously, some ignominiously, some unnecessarily. Most are forgotten (regardless of merit), others remembered for their curious names (Alldays and Onions), a few are immortals (30-98 Vauxhall, Invicta, Jowett, Napier, Squire) and others should never have been born at all. But all contributed to the British motor industry we have to-day—either positively or negatively.

Lanchester pioneered forced lubrication, scraper rings on pistons, crankshaft torsion dampers, epicyclic gears, pre-selector change, and the foot accelerator, yet expired in 1950 although under Daimler's wing. The lesson for the industry has been taken to heart—beware pioneering! The Jowett Javelin was a brilliant post-war design—flat-4 mounted forward, independent front suspension, torsion bar to all wheels, aerodynamic shape, and high power-to-weight ratio. Yet it died of rising production when its outside source of bodies was bought up by a bigger competitor.

There are wonderful tales of the publicity-minded S. F. Edge motoring a Napier at speed over broken soda syphons at the Crystal Palace to demonstrate the controllability of the car when a tyre burst. On another occasion he persuaded pigeons to feed within a few feet of the exhaust pipe while the engine was running (and a penny balanced on the radiator cap) while he expounded for the benefit of the medical profession: "It is frequently necessary to make notes while travelling from one patient's house to another, and also imperative that a car left running outside a patient's dwelling should be as quiet and inoffensive as possible."

The book is full of surprising things, such as Napier's bid against Rolls-Royce for the expiring Bentley company. By a cat's whisker many status seekers to-day avoid following a radiator with a Napier-Bentley crest. And how many knowledgeable motorists have heard of "The Jam

NO POSSIBILITY OF ERROR
HOW many Christmas inspirations leave both parties fulfilled? Though Cousin Bertie has actually hit on your favourite tobacco, he's tormented by a suspicion that you may have given up smoking. When Aunt Caroline found you the sherry-glasses she hugged herself . . . but you are wondering uneasily if she could afford them. Demolish doubts on both sides with a year's subscription to PUNCH. Nobody gives up laughter. And who couldn't afford £2 16s.? (The truth, please.) Subscriptions: Great Britain and Eire £2 16s.; Canada (By Canadian Magazine Post) £2 10s. (\$7.25); Elsewhere Overseas £3 (U.S.A. \$9.00). Write to: Department ED., PUNCH, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4, or hand this form to your usual newsagent or bookstall. U.S.A. and Canadian readers may remit by cheques on their own banks. Other overseas readers should consult their bankers or remit by postal money order.

MY NAME /MR. MRS. MISS
 (BLOCK LETTERS)

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Please send PUNCH throughout 1961 to the name(s) and address(es) as detailed on attached sheet of paper, preceded by a Greetings Card on my behalf to arrive at Christmas. (The service can be started earlier if desired.)

Factory" at Maidenhead, home of lost causes?

Looking at the photographs is a walk through an engineer's graveyard, and the text is a mine of rare information on the subject.

— RUSSELL BROCKBANK

FRENCH AND ENGLISH

La Vie Anglaise. Tony Mayer. Translated by Christopher Sykes. Illustrated by Osbert Lancaster. *Gollancz*, 15/-

"For humour, there is always *Punch*," is Mr. Mayer's terse commendation in his chapter about the English Press, and one wishes one could wholeheartedly recommend his book in this particular. Indecision of aims produces a "falling between two stools." One is never quite certain (how can one be with these foreigners?) whether the author is producing genuine data *ipso facto modus vivendi anglaise*, or whether he is trying to beat us at our own phlegmatic game of understatement. Admittedly when he deals with specifically French subjects such as sex and food Mr. Mayer reveals himself to be the continental that he is. It is when he attempts to explore

and explain our historical, political and social manners that one naturally doubts his intelligence. Fortunately Mr. Osbert Lancaster's Anglo-Saxon drawings convince us that this report is to be classified as a book of humour.

— KAY DICK

SOME POETS

Collected Poems 1930-1960. Richard Eberhart. *Chatto and Windus*, 25/-. Not quite all Eberhart has written, but the most worthwhile. Hard going, I think, in the American manner, with a strong rhetorical deployment of abstract nouns; but there are always large ideas behind the abstracts, which sometimes work together to produce poems of force and majesty.

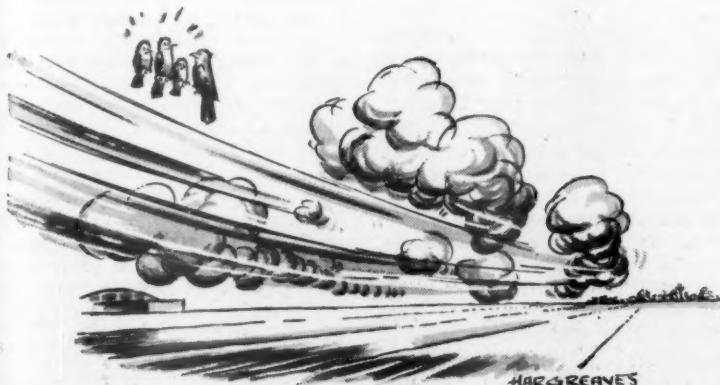
The Colossus and Other Poems. Sylvia Plath. *Heinemann*, 15/-. A first volume and a real find. American too, but different. Concrete experiences arranged in clean, easy verse, ornate where necessary. The title poem concerns the repair and cleaning of a vast statue, a monstrous and decaying father-figure. It has the forceful symbolism of a good surrealist painting. Miss Plath's outlook is gloomy but she is exhilarating to read.

Poems 1955-1959. Boris Pasternak. *Collins*, 16/-. Unjudgeable, really, what with being translations from an unknown language and written by a man whose mere name carries enormous emotional appeal. They are mostly short-lined quatrains about nature, and must mainly depend in the original on the authority of Pasternak's voice. This Michael Harari's translations, though deft and pleasing, inevitably lack.

Selected Poems 1923-1958. e. e. cummings. *Faber*, 18/-. Almost all the cummings anyone except an addict needs. This shrewd selection contains all the famous poems, deploys his various moods, and demonstrates how discipline and thought have enabled a moderate talent to produce considerable verse.

The Enmity of Noon. Peter Champkin. *Robert Hale*, 10/6. An odd mixture, all in low-toned "normal" verse, of some excellent half-satire on the accepted attitudes of civilization, a few effective creepies, and some less interesting straight poetry.

— PETER DICKINSON





FOR WOMEN

What Colour Christmas?

I'M dreaming of a grey Christmas, mild and muggy, with occasional gusts of warm wind and not one snowflake anywhere.

My White Christmas last year in Montreal looked pretty enough. Often the sky was blue, the sun shone, and instead of fog we only had thick crunchy snow of the best greetings-card quality. The trouble was that you couldn't just admire the stuff. You had to live with it, walk in it, keep it out and remain sane in spite of it.

As the first few tons of snow crashed down I remembered how a miserable half-inch fall used to disorganize the British way of life. The municipal snow-clearing heroes of Montreal knew how to cope; they removed the stuff almost as fast as it came down with giant snow-ploughs, crane-and-lorry teams and jeeps with rotating blades which churned up the mess effectively. The blades obscured the driver's view but this didn't diminish his speed. His job was to churn, ours to dodge him.

Yet even these heroes couldn't cope with all the snow. Gradually a thick white-grey layer spread over the pavements with cleverly concealed ice-blocks here and there which made pedestrians fall flat on their faces. Helpfully the municipal snow-clearers scattered a mixture of salt and sawdust all over the place. This produced a fascinating chemical substance which ate holes into one's nylons and left indelible marks on all types of footwear.

Which brings up the problem of clothes, conveniently ignored by white-Christmassers. To keep the world white it's got to be very cold outside, cold enough to freeze the tears in your watering eyes so that you blink through a panel of self-made ice, while inside it's got to be very hot. Caught between

these extremes one must wear thin clothes underneath a very heavy coat with peculiar accessories and spend much time stripping and wrapping up in quick turns.

Protective accessories turn the seasonal stampede of shopping, visiting, party-going and evenings out into a nightmare. One has to wear sturdy boots or ordinary shoes inside ankle-high rubber goloshes. Both get too messy to be taken indoors. If you prefer boots their removal leaves you in your stocking feet which is unglamorous. The answer is to carry a pair of decent shoes, preferably tied to your person. To remove tight-fitting rubbers takes minutes and skill; it also leaves your fingers black. Either way your entry is spoilt. You can't sweep in from a snowstorm with bright eyes, tossing your curls and smiling enchantingly.

Anyway, tossing curls is dangerous. After a few minutes in a warm room those pretty snow crystals on your hair or your mink hat begin to melt, sending tiny rivulets down your make-up.

Then there's the business of snuggies, the knee-length woollen drawers which are strictly necessary for outdoors and intolerable indoors. It's the touchstone of a girl's social accomplishment to slither out of them unobtrusively in some suitable hiding-place. At parties single ladies store their snuggies in their coat sleeves while married ones conceal theirs in their husbands' overcoat pockets. Both methods cause much trouble to the absent-minded who forget to put them on before leaving. A sudden gesture in the street such as hailing a taxi may send a large tubular garment flying out of a girl's sleeve in full view of an appreciative public. And since men's overcoats look notoriously alike many marital misunderstandings are caused by the discovery of a supernumerary pair in pillar-box red.

Christmas outings are hazardous. Your escort may turn up in a long shaggy lynx coat which makes him look like a yeti and if his insufficiently winterized car breaks down you won't even make it to the restaurant two streets away. The northerly wind is capable of blowing you back where you came from. Yes, it's Christmas, it's white all right, but the only jingle-bells you hear are the electrically operated ones inside department stores. No reindeer in his right mind is willing to appear out of doors.

Let me go on dreaming of a grey Christmas with nice black pavements.

— BEATA BISHOP

Modern Education

WHEN I think of the years spent weeping in school over quadratic equations I feel quite hysterical. When I recall the dancing teacher's desolation because we could not master the intricacies of an archaic country jig a hopeless sense of waste takes over. Why did not the curriculum include cooking breakfast with one hand and separating a pair of battling sons with the other? The ability to solve quadratic equations seems useless when your daughter needs fivepence for bus fare and you have only threepence-halfpenny, but I admit the point of the archaic jig

when exasperation renders me utterly speechless.

I'd be the last one to say a word against our educationists. They try, they really try. I know that. So I am prepared to swallow a number of their curious notions, including the statement that their methods have taught a child to think. This may be open to question, nay, even to hysterical laughter, but what I have no patience with is a naïve assertion that present day curricula fit the child for adulthood.

For instance, it is not thought necessary to inform girls that mother-

hood requires the stamina of a rugby forward, so only boys go through this toughening-up process. This is ludicrous. *We* are the ones who need tenacity, strength and a powerful turn of speed, not they.

Where too are the lessons in plausible lying? This is a most subtle art, essential to loyal motherhood and only learned after years of seeing the error of telling the truth. What mother is not faced with almost daily protection of her innocent little ones? "Why, Mr. Brown, I cannot *imagine* what you mean. They were here with me last night; someone else must have blown up your silly old greenhouse."

Inter-family fights require the finesse of a Machiavelli and while they rage most of us are hopelessly out of our depth. I cannot think why schools do not make use of the countless number of retired Army generals. After all, they've finished their memoirs by now (pray heaven) and all this inactivity must be driving them crazy. A course in battle tactics would prove invaluable to girls, enabling them to keep both children and husbands in order without lowering themselves to screeching "Shut up, the lot of you!"

From what I can gather the domestic science section has not improved since my day. The main principle still seems to be aimed at ensuring that both the pupil and her family contract severe colic, and we've lost more pets than I care to think about. Schools seem unaware that we no longer bash our clothes against a stone down at the canal, and no one is taught the intricacies of controlling a modern washer-cum-spin-drier with one hand and knocking up a speedy lunch with the other. I hate to say this but I don't think they would know how.

My friends, the present curriculum is due for a drastic overhaul. Any resemblance between modern education and modern living is not only coincidental but downright laughable. Of course there may be another side to this, a few points I might have missed. Raise the question at your next P.T.A. meeting and I can promise you a lively change from discussing a jumble sale for the purchase of a television set for the Common Room.

— JOAN HARBORNE

☆

Bearded Ladies

"And, of course, the women of Yorkshire —this perhaps was a tribute to the virility of the Women's Institutes whose marquee was a focal point—rallied to Harrogate in great numbers." — *Yorkshire Post*

Organization Woman

I HAVE taken formal leave of the Mayoress,
And the Branch staff have brought me down to the train,
All of us sure the thing has been a success,
Worth doing and well worth trying again.

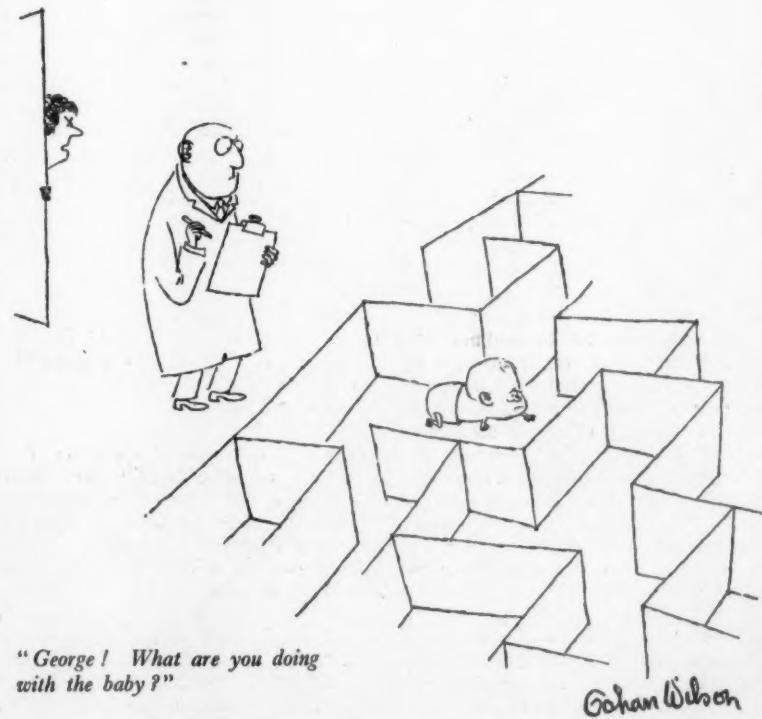
The stress of bringing about long-thought-of things
Has burnt itself to a vapour and distilled
The faint, heady exuberance that springs
From an old fear outfaced and unfulfilled.

And I am free to sit in my corner seat,
To give and take my thanks with an empty mind,
To feel the train stir and the wheels beat
And, hedged safe by the widening gap behind,

To feel my official pulse slow to a stop,
To shake my hair loose and sit as I choose,
To relax my lips and allow my lids to drop,
And slide my feet slightly out of my shoes

Until I find it difficult to recall
All it meant before it was all begun,
And wonder why I worried about it all,
And what the thing is worth now it is done.

— CELIA HOLLAND



Toby Competitions

No. 143—What an In-ter-est-ing Job

OLD-fashioned school books often used dialogues for teaching. Competitors are invited to write not more than 120 words from a dialogue teaching advertising, television script-writing or marriage counselling.

A framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up receive a one-guinea book token. Entries by Wednesday, December 14. Address to TOBY COMPETITION No. 143, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 140

(Keep it Clean)

The request for a stretch of prose or verse entirely in four-lettered words produced a large and ingenious entry, mainly about Lady Chatterley, Adam and Eve, the atom bomb and the difficulty of this competition. Competitors availed themselves freely of the wide latitude allowed to cheating: "... when Jack goes past that hole, let's push t'lad over t'rim." (They came from York.) was a fine example. The winner is:

R. G. R. MARSDEN
TEMPLETON
TIVERTON
DEVON

Last year they said: "We're sure that bomb dust will harm life. Much more will

mean ruin. This bomb test lark must stop."

This year they hint that much less dust fell than they said last time.

Next year we'll hear that bomb dust will make your hair grow.

Then: "Much more harm from fags than from bomb dust."

Time will pass. We'll have food made from good, rich bomb dust. Then we'll just drop dead.

Pity.

Following are the runners-up:

Extract from a four-letter Gothic Tragedy
Monk: Flee, flee, fair Lady! Flee, else
base-born foes
Soon seek, then find, then slay
thee with foul glee.
This babe, fair high-born heir
from sire most meet,
Must hide here, free from harm
when thou hast gone.
Full safe this holy cell.

Maid:

Dear Lady, list!
This monk hath said good rede;
then flee anon,
Lest evil work mote fall. Well
were fair babe
Left here with this good monk.
Come, Lady, flee!

Lady:

Take then this babe, dear monk,
good holy soul.
Ward well this tiny life from hurt,
from harm.

Monk: Lord save thee, Lady.

Lady: Good monk, fare thee well!
Exit lady with maid. Exit monk with babe.
A. C. Embleton, 14 Devonshire Terrace,
London, W.2

Beer Song

When days drag long (dull word, dull deed)
This mere half pint won't meet your need,
When luck runs skew (when bond? when
pool?)

This lone half pint won't help, poor fool;
When shot your bolt, when lost your race.
This bare half pint can't help your case.
Come, fill your mugs, soak care away:
Each pint will make this life less grey.

D. M. Hawke, 21 Bardwell Court,
Bardwell Road, Oxford

Dear Sirs, this very poor-paid bard
Will find your test this week most hard,
With mind gone soft, each grey cell dozy.
Read, kind sirs, this four foot posy.

Come, tune your self unto this plea;
Just keep your mind from bias free.
Let's keep "that word," that word that rips
Anon from each one's dark blue lips.

Don't damn "that word"; we're only clay.
Take some word else? Give over, pray.
What oath will work when this ain't said,
What will they yell with "four dots" dead?

Godfrey L. Ackers, Little Sandford,
Snow Hill, Crawley Down, Sussex

Geof. Cant., with teen,
Told John SE18
"Even John 23rd
Won't know that word."

Peter Hendry, 13 Woodland Rise,
Oxted, Surrey

This book (Lady Chat.), pure, holy (also
base—even rude) says more ably with just
four inky dots ("that word") what many
sane, wise folk have only made some vain
hint over, year upon year. They know this
word well; they have seen true love: they
have seen what part true love must play
thru' life—they want some ever true wife
with whom duty will mean more than mere
love. With D.H.L.'s work, this just ain't real
life.

Hector C. Davie, St. Peter's Hall, Oxford

When down from fair Eden poor Adam fell.
Adam said "D-mn." Adam also said
"H-ll."

From that very time, warm clad, less pure,
Man's wife, Eve's sons have made darn sure
That acts that were fine, word sans spot
Must bear sin's name, wear sin's blot.
Eons have come, long ages gone past
When each book writ, each play cast
Must miss this word, must shun that deed.
Make good with dots: thus obey Law's
need.

Then some days back that jury said "Yell
'Good News! Head Line! Oyez! All's
Well'
We'll call D-mn Damn. We'll call H-ll
Hell."

J. P. Newling, 27 Bassett Gardens, North
Weald, Essex



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